THE WAUWATOSA THEOLOGY, JOHN PHILIP KOEHLER, AND THE THEOLOGICAL TRADITION OF MIDWESTERN AMERICAN LUTHERANISM, 1900 - 1930

by

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION: THE WISCONSIN SYNOD, THE WAUWATOSA THEOLOGY, JOHN PHILIP KOEHLER, AND THE PROBLEM OF MIDWESTERN AMERICAN LUTHERANISM

Neither the Wauwatosa Theology nor the person of John Philip Koehler, with which the study is preoccupied, has attracted any widespread attention among students of American church history, nor has either exerted any significant influence upon the development of American theological thought.[1]

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[1] The term, Wauwatosa Theology (or, Wauwatosa Gospel) will be regularly employed in this study. From 1893 to 1929 the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary was located at Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. From 1900 to 1929, J. P. Koehler taught there; in 1929, the school was moved to Thiensville, north of Milwaukee. That same year Koehler was temporarily relieved of his duties as president and professor, and in 1930, was ousted. Thus, the moving of the Seminary coincided with the repudiation by the Synod of Koehler's person and theology.

The term is generally objected to by Wisconsin Synod men and if used at all is usually used in a critical sense, i.e., the "so-called Wauwatosa Theology." In general, Wisconsin tends to avoid the issue involved, though an ambiguous treatment which also uses the term is found in Elmer Kiessling's "The Tie that Binds," an essay interpreting the history of the Synod read at the Thirty-fourth Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, held at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota, August 7-14, 1957. The essay was reprinted in Faith-Life, XXXII (May, 1959), pp. 5-10.

That the Seminary was, in fact, characterized by a peculiar point of view which is no longer dominant is really beyond dispute if one studies the Theologische Quartalschrift of the period and compares it with the same journal since 1928.

Not only is this true, but it is also true that the history of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod has similarly attracted next to no attention, nor has it figured significantly in the story of American Lutheranism.[1]

In fact, people who otherwise demonstrate a fairly complete grasp of the Lutheran story in America frequently know almost nothing of the Wisconsin Synod, although it is at the present time the fourth largest Lutheran group in the United States with, in 1962, 350,042 baptized members in 846 congregations, served by 650 pastors.[2] Where the Wisconsin Synod is known at all it is generally known only insofar as it represents the extreme right wing of American Lutheranism. It has off and on in recent years been given publicity, but this publicity has come as a result of certain views and practices which are peculiar to it among the American Lutheran groups, or, at least, peculiar to it in the rigidity and consistency with which these are put into practice. Thus the Wisconsin Synod can validly be described as the "Isolated Synod."[1] And here, as elsewhere, it is particularly its rigorous views on "unionism" which are singled out for attention.[2] Its views on the Boy Scouts and the military chaplaincy largely grow out of and apply its position on unionism.

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[1] Before 1959, the official name of the group was the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States. The Joint Synod came into being through a union in 1892, of the Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan Synods. In 1917, this became a complete amalgamation to become the Joint Synod. For the story of this simply told, see _Continuing in His Word_ (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1951.)

[2] From statistics compiled by the National Lutheran Council and printed in _Concordia Theological Monthly_, XXXIV (November, 1963), p. 679. The statistics also indicate that Wisconsin has enjoyed less growth than any other of the major Lutheran groups.

However, even aside from its theologically isolated character, so isolated in fact that at present it has no fellowship even with the conservative Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, with which it had, since 1872, been associated in the Synodical Conference until August, 1963--the Wisconsin Synod, in sharp contrast to the Missouri Synod, which until quite recent times had shared Wisconsin's theological isolation, has also been relatively isolated both geographically and culturally. Except for Milwaukee, it has had no strength in any urban center, and the great bulk of its membership has been rural and small town and confined largely to Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan.[1] Culturally, it has held on to a foreign language longer than any other major Lutheran group, and even today a surprisingly high percentage of its congregations continue to use German to some extent, and until the last ten years all theological candidates were expected to be able to serve in either English or German.[2]

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[1] Time, LXXXII (August 23, 1963), pp. 48-49.

[2] The Wisconsin Synod's doctrine of "unionism" is really no different from the traditional, and still official, doctrine of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, except that it is more consistently and rigorously put into practice. Carried to its logical conclusions, as it is by Wisconsin, it makes even joint table prayer forbidden with those who in any point of doctrine differ from the orthodox group. See the Time article for a typical quotation to this effect. For a full discussion of the doctrine which describes the practice of the Wisconsin Synod, see John Fritz' Pastoral Theology (second edition, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1945), pp. 211-216. For a treatment of the theme by an ultra-conservative Wisconsin Synod man (who later left the Synod because it failed to consistently apply the doctrine), see Egbert Schaller's "Christian Fellowship," Theologische Quartalschrift, XLV (April, 1948), 87-94.

Nor has the Wisconsin Synod ever been successful in the sense that it has experienced rapid growth or inner peace and unity. In fact it has from its beginning been plagued by a series of inner strifes.[1] In this century it has experienced two rather major schisms as well as a steady withdrawal of congregations over the years.

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[1] Statistical Report of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod for 1960 (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1961).

[2] As late as 1955, just under one-fourth of the congregations employed German. In 1960, 146 congregations out of a total of 827, used some German. Ibid. The Evangelical Lutheran Church, on the other hand, with 2,477 congregations and also rural and representing no earlier an immigration, had only a handful of congregations using any Norwegian and most of these were in Canada. 1960 Yearbook of the Uniting Churches. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1960).

In the years from 1926 to the latter 1930's, the Protestant Controversy, in which J. P. Koehler was directly involved and which will form part of this study, led to the suspension from synodical membership of just under 40 pastors and professors as well as several congregations. The controversy was, furthermore, violent in the polemics it produced. Then in the latter 1950's began the exodus of a number of ultraconservatives who believed the Synod was not taking a sufficiently firm stand over against the growing "liberalism" of Missouri. Primarily this group protested what is regarded as an unjustified delay in breaking off all fraternal relationships with the erring brethren. In January, 1961, there was organized at Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, the Church of the Lutheran Confession. With the exception of a few members who had withdrawn from the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (the small Norwegian group which since 1920, had been a member of the

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[1] For the story of the controversies in the earlier period see J. P. Koehler's Geschichte der Allgemeinen Evangelisch--Lutherischen Synode von Wisconsin und Andern Staaten (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1925). This is the only scholarly study of the Synod. For this study, except for the documents pointed in the edition above, reference will be to the revised and completed English edition, as noted in the bibliography.

Synodical Conference) for similar reasons, the 64 pastors involved in the new synod were former Wisconsin Synod members.[1] By the end of 1962, the new synod included 8,992 members in 60 parishes.[2]

It is also true that even aside from these violent disruptions, there has been throughout the Synod's history and especially in recent years, a steady pattern of withdrawal going on. Large numbers of its pastors have over the years left to join the much more successful and, since the 1930's, more flexible Missouri Synod.[3] The statistical reports document this fact as well as the fact that since the 1940's, the movement has taken on sizable proportions.[1] Since the suspension of fellowship with the Missouri Synod (August 17, 1961, at the thirty-sixth convention of the Synod) the exodus has only increased a process that had gone on for a long time. The tendency, too, has been for the larger, more successful congregations to leave, in many cases leading to the withdrawal from the local congregations of a small minority who then establish a new Wisconsin Synod congregation. And while the Missouri Synod has typically chosen to allow some variation and even obvious inconsistency with its official position in order to hold its membership, Wisconsin has chosen confessional self-identity even at the expense of membership loss.

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[1] "34 Churches Form Synod," Milwaukee Journal, January 27, 1961, p. 3.

[2] Statistics from the Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXIV (November, 1963), p. 679. For the theology and point of view of the Church of the Lutheran Confession, see its church paper, The Lutheran Spokesman, (New Ulm, 1959).

[3] Interestingly, the trend toward greater flexibility within the Missouri Synod began to become apparent at about the same time that the thoroughly conservative Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States was adopted in 1932. The trend toward flexibility which gained momentum in the 1930's is easily observable. See, for instance, the unofficial but widely circulated and tolerated American Lutheran (New York: American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, 1918--). By the 1930's the old pattern of Missouri was increasingly coming under critical scrutiny in this publication and it is noteworthy that its writers included many men prominent in the Synod.

So too the Wisconsin Synod has tended to lose its men as they go on to graduate schools to pursue an education outside of synodical schools. That is, the Synod's Northwestern College at Watertown, Wisconsin, prepares its students almost exclusively for theological study. And since it is the only synodical school which offers such preparation and since almost all the graduates go on to the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, it is revealing that of the 740 graduates of Northwestern

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[1] As see, page 2 of the 1956 Statistical Report. See also the "Announcements" in the Northwestern Lutheran. From 1961 to 1963, these carried with regularity notices that such and such a pastor or congregation had "joined the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, and is no longer in fellowship with us."

College from 1920 to 1954, 20 have earned Ph.D. degrees. Of these not one serves within the Wisconsin Synod. The same tendency is apparent when one examines the graduates who have received master's degrees, though at this point a number have remained within the Synod.[1] The isolated character of the Synod is also apparent from the fact that its two collegiate institutions (Northwestern College and Dr. Martin Luther College at New Ulm, Minnesota), recruit their faculties almost exclusively from graduates of one of the two schools, the majority of whom have no graduate degrees. Historically, too, and as a matter of choice, both schools have been unaccredited, although the New Ulm school, which prepares teachers for the Synod's parochial school system, finally requested in 1962, recognition from the University of Minnesota. This move was forced by the pressures applied on parochial schools in some states to have recognized teachers.[2]

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[1] Based on the "Alumni List" in the Catalog of Northwestern College, 1962-63. Some who have received advanced degrees may not be so designated but since such men would probably be those out of contact with the College it would only strengthen the observation above.

[2] The accreditation conflict waged within the Synod since about 1918. For a statement of the prevailing opinion see John P. Meyer's "Der Kampf um unser Schulwesen," Theologische Quartalschrift, XXI (July, 1924), pp. 168-179. J. P. Koehler, too, was against accreditation, since he feared state dictation and because he wanted the church school to lead rather than follow also academically. He never excused the second rate results that frequently followed. See his son Karl's series in the 1920 Northwestern Lutheran, numbers 15, 16, 17, 18, and 19, entitled "The Teaching of Christianity." Here Karl gives expression to his father's point of view.

Thus, Wisconsin has, to be sure, maintained self-identity, but only at the expense of cultural and theological isolation. And this again only serves to point up the rather obvious observation that Wisconsin has almost no influence within contemporary American Protestantism. A provincial, backward synod, and the last place one would expect to find in its tradition any very exciting theological orientation. The last place, too, where one would expect to find any very self-critical point of view, since provincial institutions are generally not especially given to self-analysis and criticism.

Nor has the situation ever been much different, and perhaps the most significant thing about the group, at least on the surface, is its development from a loose and formless theological emphasis to one of rigid and self-conscious conservatism. Certainly the history of the Synod is lacking in the dramatic qualities of some of the other Lutheran groups. There is nothing, for instance, to even compare with the exciting, dramatic, and almost incredibly successful story of the Missouri Synod.[1] Nor did the Wisconsin Synod have men of the intellectual caliber of such Norwegian-American church men as U. V. Koren, J. A. Ottesen, H. A. Preus, or B. J. Muus. And even an Elling Eielsen, if not intellectually gifted, was certainly a forceful and interesting leader.[1] The Iowa Synod had behind it the genius of a Wilhelm Loehe, of Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, while the Buffalo Synod had the forceful, articulate and high-church, even if unsuccessful, leadership of J. A. Grabau.[2] The Missourians, of course, had in Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, a type of leader not often found in any group.[3] In general one would have to say that the Midwestern Lutheran groups had a number of outstanding leaders.

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[1] For a definitive account of its early days and the testing through which it went, see Walter Forster's Zion on the Mississippi. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953).

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[1] E. Clifford Nelson and Eugene L. Fevold have given us a good history of Norwegian-American Lutheranism, as well as pointed the way toward what ought to be done in the way of study of other Lutheran immigrant groups, in their two-volume The Lutheran Church among Norwegian-Americans (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1960). See volume I for the early story.

[2] No satisfactory study of the Buffalo Synod or of Grabau exists. However, the issues of the Synod's church paper, Wachende Kirche (Buffalo, 1866-1929), carried from 1920-1929, a history of the group.

[3] Seldom, perhaps, has any individual so molded and influenced a church group to the extent that Walther did Missouri. If anything, A. R. Wentz understates when he says that "Walther takes his place with Muhlenberg, Schmucker, and Krauth in the quartet of the most outstanding personalities in the history of the Lutheran Church in America," p. 117 of his Basic History of Lutheranism in America, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1955).

The Wisconsin Synod had on the other hand an undramatic beginning.[1] Its leaders, although devoted and hard-working, were hardly men of either intellectual or theological profundity.[2] Intellectually, they suffered under a "practical" education, while theologically they were nondescript.

Nevertheless, from very unpromising beginnings was to develop a synod which is perhaps the most obvious illustration in the whole story of American Lutheranism of the triumph of confessional orthodoxy. And from this Synod, too, was to come at least one theologian of the first rank and a theological school which in its heyday offered a variation on the dominant theme of the period and context.[3] It is then the aim of this study to pay some attention to the theological tradition of the Wisconsin Synod, to pay a good deal of attention to the period and context, what we will here refer to as Midwestern American Lutheranism, to focus on the Wauwatosa Theology, and especially on John Philip Koehler. Koehler was not only the father of the Wauwatosa Theology, but he was perhaps the most creative and original theologian of Midwestern American Lutheranism during the historical period in which he was active.[1]

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[1] The only scholarly account of this is J. P. Koehler's Geschichte der Allgemeinen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Wisconsin und Andern Staaten. Continuing in His Word, The History of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, 1850-1950. (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1951), is an official history, but it is superficial, lacking in critical analysis and is self-congratulatory. It is best in its summary of the early period and has a good chapter on Northwestern College.

[2] Several letters have been preserved and printed in Koehler's Geschichte. These bear out this observation, and Synod's first leader, John Muehlhaeuser, would have also to be so characterized.

[3] The only other possible theologian of high rank in the Wisconsin Synod would be Adolph Hoenecke. His Evangelische-Lutherische Dogmatik (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1912), is one of two full scale Lutheran dogmatics in the tradition of Lutheran orthodoxy produced in this country.

At the outset it must be frankly stated that J. P. Koehler is relatively unknown outside his own circles. By and large the generation that followed him had no interest in nor any conception of the issues that appeared to him as basic. And in keeping with Koehler's conception of Verstockung, the hardening and decline and blindness that tends to set in after a period of youthful vitality and originality, his own experience only bore this out.[2] The Wisconsin Synod had had its heyday and its rejection of what he had tried to teach it was only to be expected. The best that could be expected was copywork. In point of fact this came true, and he has had almost no influence even in his own group which eventually repudiated him and with him his viewpoint. In this sense he is insignificant.

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[1] Though Koehler lived until 1951, his period is really that of roughly 1880 to 1925. After that date the environment was forcing subtle changes on American Lutheranism, while Koehler's own interests and points of reference were determined by an earlier period, especially the period of the Election Controversy of the 1880's and the theological methodology then dominant. Koehler, after about 1920, really contributed largely variations on earlier themes. Of theological developments outside of America since World War I, he was apparently almost totally ignorant.

[2] A genetic analogy runs through Koehler's conception of history. There is youth and enthusiasm, maturity and productive work, middle age with a living off the fruits of the earlier period, and finally senility and death. For a treatment of this in theological terms, see his "Lehre der Schrift

It is also true that much of what he said that had value is no longer new or novel but simply taken for granted. This is true, for instance, of his criticism of the atomistic proof-text approach to dogmatics which in his day and place reigned supreme, though it is by no means true that such a methodology is no longer practiced.[1] It is also true of his detection of

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von der Verstockung," Theologische Quartalschrift, IX (October, 1912), pp. 246-249; X (January, 1913), pp. 11-34. The application of the theme is everywhere apparent in his work. This too accounts for the near ecstasy with which he received Oswald Spengler's Decline of the West. Spengler tended to reinforce what Koehler had already come to as a near deterministic view of history. For a discussion and appreciation of Spengler, see Koehler's "As to Appreciation of Art," IV (May, 1931), pp. 3-5. Significantly, he discusses Spengler as an artist.

[1] Franz Pieper's three volume Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950-1953), in this English edition remains the standard text at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. This represents, in some respects, the ultimate in just such a proof text methodology. On the other hand, a response which is probably fairly typical of contemporary American Lutheran systematic theologians is represented by Carl Rasmussen's review of the first volume of the Pieper work, in Theology Today, VIII (May, 1951), pp. 261-262, while the work of such a significant Lutheran systematician as Martin Heinecken can hardly be understood except in the context of his reaction against precisely the methodology represented by Pieper. See, for instance, Heinecken's Moment Before God. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1956), which constitutes a running polemic against scholastic orthodoxy.

the difference in motif and methodology between Luther and the classical Lutheran dogmaticians of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Here the contemporary Luther research has left Koehler far behind. In addition, some of his observations strike one today as naive and distinctly dated, and because his criticisms were directed against his own environment they frequently appear to an outsider as fairly obvious. Nor are we apt to be satisfied with his somewhat deterministic viewpoint toward history, though it may well be that he is more correct at this point that one would like to grant.

In his historical context, however, and within the branch of Lutheranism in which he was born, educated, lived, and did his work, J. P. Koehler was a thoroughly amazing phenomenon.[1] He is worthy of study for at least four reasons:

1. He is interesting in his own right. He had broad cultural and theological interests and his intuitive insights were frequently original. Like A. C. McGiffert, he was

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[1] His whole environment was provincial and he never had any real opportunity to move in scholarly circles nor even to get acquainted outside his circles. His education was confined to his study at Northwestern College (B.A., 1877) and Concordia Seminary (Graduate, 1880). Nor did he ever have a good library at his disposal. Concerning his educational experience, he says, "Koehler's predisposition for history, literature, and art was home-grown; the stimulating teaching of Meumann, Notz, and Ernst in his student days [at Northwestern College] helped to foster it; the accent on dogmatics at St. Louis challenged it, but then the advent of Stoeckhardt [the first exegete of the Missouri Synod] there confirmedit. "History of the Wisconsin Synod," _Faith-Life_, XV (February, 1942), p. 7.

preoccupied with the continuous tendency in the Church toward legalism, though unlike McGiffert, he did not share a dislike for the dialectic of doctrine even if he likewise saw what tended to accompany it and knew, too, that sharp doctrinal formulations are no guarantee of vital religious life and may, in fact, act as a soporific. Koehler's Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1917), is an impressive volume both because of its coverage and its interpretations, in spite of the fact that some of the scholarship is outdated and, even when new, suffered in some respects because of the limited sources available to the author.[1]

Jaroslav Pelikan was not unduly extravagant when he wrote Koehler's obituary, though Pelikan's knowledge of Koehler would appear to be based almost entirely on the Lehrbuch.

> "Professor Koehler's interests and accomplishments spanned many fields of human endeavor as well as theology. In the latter field he was particularly given to historical theology and exegesis, which he regarded

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[1] Fortunately, this lack was especially in secondary materials. Koehler had read widely and deeply in an amazing number of primary sources, and constantly emphasized reading the works of a man rather than works about him. He had, for instance,a good grasp of the early church, an excellent grasp on Luther and the dogmaticians; and had read through both Kant and Schleiermacher. His remarks concerning men since Schleiermacher do not appear to be based on reading of the sources. As might be expected, his work is uneven throughout.

> as a historical discipline. Viewing the history of the Church within the context of the history of culture, he brought to church history a rare combination of scrupulous scholarship and evangelical insight, which enabled him to evaluate the phenomena of the Church's past in a light that was true to the best in the Lutheran tradition. The corruptions that have infected the Church, past and present, he saw as the narrowing of the Gospel, and he pointed them out wherever they occurred.
>
> Professor Koehler gave voice to this complex of judgments in his Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte. . . In this writer's judgment Koehler's Lehrbuch is perhaps the outstanding work of its kind to come out of American Lutheranism regardless of synod. It is almost uncanny in its penetration into the way in which such things as the establishment of the canon, the creation of the episcopacy, the cultivation of the liturgy,the zeal for the purity of doctrine, and the Christian ethical concern have become tools for legalistic perversion: . . Professor Koehler knew well and demonstrated well that in its history the Church has to be ecumenical, never sacrificing confessional loyalty and yet never permitting it to become a legalistic denominationalism."[1]

The short biographical sketch in the Lutheran Cyclopedia states the following concerning Koehler:

> "His scholarship was a comprehensive and

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[1] "John Philip Koehler," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXIII (January, 1952), pp. 50-51. The quotation is offered at this length because the views expressed are based on and constitute a summary of the theme of the Lehrbuch, which will not, however, be dealt with in any depth in this study.

> comprehending survey of life, thought, and emotion. Predominantly, however, he was a historian, who read the record of the Gospel in history in its widest sense, including the wide field of art. . ."[1]

As a church historian Koehler was already at the turn of the century pointing to things that here in America, and certainly within American Lutheranism, were not recognized. This is true, for instance, of his keen analysis of the Reformation, the character and approach of Luther, of the factors leading up to the Formula of Concord of 1580, the subtle changes that had taken place, and the development of Lutheran orthodoxy.[2] In this field, though lacking the tools of the modern Luther research and apparently not aware even of the beginnings of this work, but thoroughly at home in Luther's writings as well as the writings of the dogmaticians, Koehler was pointing to truths that were not known in large areas of American Lutheranism or elsewhere, for that matter.[1] So, too, his views on art, hymnology, and liturgics were profound, frequently original, and almost never typical of his environment.[2]

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[1] Luecker, Erwin (ed.), Lutheran Cyclopedia. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1954), p. 556. This article is based on the article in the Concordia Cyclopedia. (St. Louis, Concordia, 1927). That, in turn, is quite obviously based on a much longer, more pointed, and very interesting appreciation of Koehler written by his son, Karl. The longer article was discovered in Karl Koehler's papers after his death in 1948, and is interesting especially for the critical references to an overemphasis on dogmatics and "Koehler's early opposition to doctrinal discussion that centers in the abstract reasoning and definition, . . and to the use of the Bible as a code of proof texts." The Karl Koehler article was printed in Faith-Life, XXIV (November, 1951), pp. 5-6.

[2] For a telling example of the attempt to deny any real difference between Luther and the later dogmaticians, see the first volume of Franz Pieper's Christian Dogmatics, pp. 276-298. The subject here is verbal inspiration, but the approach to Luther is typical of Pieper and of the non-historical environment in which Koehler lived.

2. J. P. Koehler in his historical context is even more interesting, and it is this which is the major concern of this

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[1] See, the Lehrbuch, especially pp. 338-393. See also the keen contrast drawn between Luther and Melanchthon (in fundamental methodology rather than only on the specific doctrinal points were orthodoxy criticized Melanchthon while at the same time following his methodology), in Koehler's "Faith, the Quintessence of Christian Life on Earth," translated from the Theologische Quartalschrift by Kurt Zorn, Faith-Life, XXVIII (April, 1955), pp. 14-16.

[2] His views on hymnology, which subject was almost an obsession with him, will not be treated here. In keeping with his emphasis upon historical deeds as the content of Christian proclamation, he was especially interested in the objective hymnology of the sixteenth century, particularly the Luther hymn. He wrote heavily on this subject and sometimes almost seemed to believe that the recovery of the objective hymn would make for a reform of the Church. His views were not those that seem to motivate the compilers of hymn books, but they are in keeping with contemporary church music specialists. Judgments in keeping with Koehler are voiced by Karl Barth in Vol. I, part 2, pp. 252-253, of his Church Dogmatics. (New York: Charles Scribners, 1936 -). For a hymn book that would have pleased him, see Laudamus (Hannover: Schluetersche Verlagsanstalt und Buchdruckerei, 1957). For Koehler's many writings on the subject, see the Bibliography. For a brief summary of his views, see his "The American Lutheran Hymnal, a Review," Faith-Life, IV (July, 1931), pp. 8-12. His preoccupation with art is pointed up by his using art slides in lecturing over the years on the subject of church history. Much of the modern Lutheran liturgical interest struck him as formalistic and archaeological, as see his "Liturgical Comments," Ibid., IX (September, 1938), pp. 15-16.

study. That is, Koehler was born, reared, totally educated, did his life work within, and remained basically loyal to and highly appreciative of the most conservative and confessional wing of American Lutheranism, the wing frequently charged with "repristination" and where dogmatics of a certain type reigned supreme. Throughout his life, even after his ousting from the Synod as a victim of precisely this form of orthodoxy, and its continuous tendency toward Ketzerriecherei, he remained appreciative of the intent of orthodoxy even while he was a sharp critic of its form and method, and could even speak of orthodoxy's methodology as a "ball and chain to Lutheran theology here in America. . .that has hindered the emancipation from the type of dogmatics that kept the synods, called to the building of the Lutheran Church here, embroiled in constant mutual strife and opposition."[1] He was, it seems, the first significant critic of the methodology of Midwestern American Lutheranism from within the system.[2]

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[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," Ibid., XVI (December, 1943), p. 10.

[2] Throughout the study, the term Midwestern American Lutheranism will be used in the somewhat loose but generally valid way that Koehler used it. By the term he had reference not to all Lutherans in the Midwest, but to those synods of Midwestern origin and strength which represented the confessional, self-consciously orthodox movement, the groups discussed under "Immigration and Confessional Reaction," in

Koehler, since he came to maturity contemporaneously with the most violent of all the controversies, that on Election, and since his whole approach is basically a criticism of and a corrective to the methodology that prevailed and ended, as it obviously did, in an impasse, is one excellent means to view this orthodoxy. And precisely because he was so sympathetic with the intent of this Lutheranism and because he was so articulate in his analysis of its inner makeup he can help to provide at least one way to interpret it. And on the Election Controversy he offers an approach which is both original and valid.[1]

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chapter XVII of Wentz. Primarily this means then the "orthodox synods," Buffalo, Ohio, Missouri, somewhat less obviously, Iowa, increasingly as the nineteenth century went on, Wisconsin, and ambiguously, the Norwegian groups. The Danes and Swedes do not really figure here. We refer then to those groups which raised objections even to the conservative General Council, and which groups were involved in the inter-Lutheran controversies of the period and, particularly, either directly or indirectly, in the Election Controversy of the 1880's. For an introduction to this form of orthodoxy and its approach as well as the specific issues one can do no better perhaps than to examine the lively and polemical Lehre und Wehre (St. Louis: Concordia, 1855-1922). This furnishes also an excellent illustration of the basic viewpoint that bound the warring groups together. In fact, the polemics were so bitter precisely because they were carried on by men of the same school of thought, theological brothers even when synodical brotherhood was put to the test and shattered.

[1] As will be pointed out, he maintains that in this instance the Missourians were less victimized by the method than were the opponents. It is probably safe to say that the general impression is opposite to this and some even see an embryonic protest against scholasticism on the part of Missouri's opponents. See for instance, E. Clifford Nelson's generally excellent Union Movement Among Norwegian-American Lutherans,

3. J. P. Koehler is of some help, and perhaps of considerable help, in trying to understand something about the complicated and elusive reason why a rigid orthodoxy could triumph as it did in American Lutheranism, and why it took the particular form it took here which represented both a continuation but also a modification of the German movement.

Koehler documents this triumph as it affected the Wisconsin Synod in its steady movement toward conservatism, a movement which apparently did not, as might be assumed, come as a result of contact with and influence from the Missouri Synod. That is, Wisconsin did come into such contact and it certainly was assisted in its articulation through this contact. However, it cannot be assumed that Wisconsin owed its confessionalism to Missouri. The fact is that Wisconsin had set out on a conservative track at least as early as 1856, when a unanimous stand was taken against the Definite Platform, sponsored by S. S. Schmucker, B. Kuntz, and S. Sprecker. Among other things, at the 1856 meeting of the Wisconsin Synod, it was stated that the "Unaltered Augsburg Confession

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1880-1917. (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1952). Nelson sees in the "Anti-Missourians" among the Norwegians a tendency toward theological emancipation. There was such a tendency, to be sure, but the position taken in this case in no sense contributed to it. It was due, rather, to other factors. Theologically the "Anti-Missourians" were at this point thoroughly "repristination."

was founded upon the Word of God and that the adoption of the Definite Platform meant suicide for the Lutheran Church."[1] Even after this, Missouri continued sharp attacks and continued to regard Wisconsin as a "unionistic synod." For instance, in 1864, a very sharp attack, which psychologically would tend to alienate rather than to influence the Wisconsin Synod, was made by Missouri.[2] And suspicions of Wisconsin's orthodoxy continued even after the formation of the Synodical Conference in 1872, and, in fact, well up into the twentieth century.[3] All through the nineteenth century, Wisconsin lagged behind the orthodox synods.[4] Wisconsin never did, at least not until the last thirty years, achieve anything like the tight ship that Missouri managed to maintain and which it regarded as necessary. In the last quarter of a century, Wisconsin has, of course, surpassed Missouri's orthodoxy and that at a time when Missouri was being subjected to gradual but very definite modifications.[1] What the Wisconsin Synod story rather does tend to reinforce is the thesis that orthodoxy was forced upon it primarily just by the exigencies of the American situation. The story of nineteenth century American Lutheranism is the story of the triumph of confessional orthodoxy, and exceptions to this generalization are noteworthy precisely as exceptions.[2] That this is so is well-known. Why it was so is a more difficult problem and one that needs careful study. To this date there is no adequate explanation of it, certainly not the typical explanation of "cultural lag."[1] Such a generalization is at best an oversimplification. Thus, the theory assumes that the Lutheran immigrants brought with them a firm loyalty to confessionalsim (as well as a tendency toward separatism) as that had developed in Germany and found its articulation in the battle against the 1817 Prussian Union, producing the Old Lutherans, who made up the immigrant movement. The point is then that these Lutherans simply brought with them and held on to their theology here, that they isolated them-

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[1] Continuing in His Word, p. 17.

[2] Lehre und Wehre, X (October, 1864), p. 312.

[3] See references scattered through Koehler's "History of the Wisconsin Synod," especially Faith-Life, XIII (April, 1940), pp. 7-14.

[4] Koehler gives an interesting statement on this subject. "Missouri, Buffalo, Iowa, and Ohio had strictly adhered to the Word of God, according to their lights, and for that reason looked down upon the Wisconsin Synod. In the latter's meetings the executive speeches of Muehlhaeuser and Bading spoke of a 'mild Lutheranism.' That expression really had little to do with Luther or doctrine, but is aimed at excessive doctrinal strife. . . But the others, while fighting each other, were agreed in this at least that Wisconsin was a unionistic body." Ibid., XIV (November, 1943), p. 9.

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[1] An examination of the Theologische Quartalschrift in the 1930's, shows a sharp increase in its preoccupation with orthodoxy as well as a rising criticism of Missouri's "laxity", which criticism took on major proportions in the 1940's, and 1950's. The change that has come over Missouri is obvious to any careful observer. It comes home, however, quite sharply if one looks, for instance, at the two-volume anthology of doctrinal essays from Missouri's past as gathered, edited, and published by Theodore Laetsch under the title, The Abiding Word. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1946-1947). By no stretch of the imagination could these "official" essays be said to actually describe Missouri as it is today. This, in spite of the fact that Missouri continues, as in its polemic with Wisconsin, to state that it stands where it has always stood and thus, as though to prove this, reaffirmed the Brief Statement at its forty-fourth triennial convention in San Francisco, June 17-26, 1959. For the text of the Brief Statement, see Concordia Theological Monthly, II (June, 1931), pp. 401-416. This represents the quintessence of the legacy of confessional orthodoxy influenced also by the Fundamentalist movement.

[2] As, for instance, the formation among the Norwegians in 1893, of the small and relatively uninfluential Lutheran Free Church, molded by the influence of the "Augsburg Theologians," especially that of Georg Sverdrup with his scathing

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criticism of scholastic and intellectualistic orthodoxy, of "Missourianism" and all its works and ways. This is well surveyed in E. Clifford Nelson's Union Movement Among Norwegian-American Lutherans. See especially pages 155-182. For a biography of Sverdrup, see Andreas Helland's Georg Sverdrup, the Man and His Message (Minneapolis: Messenger Press, 1947). It must be noted, however, that this was no flexible movement and just as rigid as the orthodoxy it criticized.

[1] This theory is so common that it is frequently simply taken for granted. As an example of this taken for granted in what is otherwise a perceptive article see Clarence Kilde's "Heresy in Milwaukee: an Interpretation," Christianity and Crisis, XV (December 12, 1955), pp. 163-167. Thus Kilde can say, "Generally speaking, Lutheranism in the Midwest, whether German or Scandinavian, is a diaspora culture. That is to say, theology stopped developing with the immigrant fathers of the church in the Mississippi Valley." The first sentence may be true, but the next of the statement is indefensible in point of fact. The story of the Wisconsin Synod alone disproves it as well as the American modifications to orthodoxy.

selves culturally and religiously and thus succeeded in maintaining their identity in the new situation. The theory, can to be sure, point to certain historical facts. The language problem, for instance, immediately did isolate these immigrants. The theory can point, too, to the obvious example of the Saxons who made up the beginnings of the Missouri Synod, it can point to the Buffalo Synod or to the Iowa Synod, or less clearly to the Synod for the Norwegian Evangelical Church in America.[1] But even with such an apparently obvious case as that of Missouri, the theory is probably an oversimplification. Missouri attracted the loyalties of large numbers of German immigrants who obviously did not come here as solidly orthodox, did not, in fact, come here for religious reasons at all; and, furthermore, Missouri's almost incredible success and its ability to adjust so well in many respects to what the environment called for are not characteristics that normally accompany "cultural lag." More seriously, the theory has to overlook the modifications that took place. It overlooks, for instance, the fact that the one group, the Buffalo Synod, which most rigidly refused to modify was a dismal failure here. Nor does the theory fit either the Ohio or Wisconsin Synods which became increasingly conservative. In addition, the movement toward conservatism among the Eastern Lutherans of the General Synod and the organization of the General Council in 1867, as a protest against the General Synod, can hardly be credited to culturally isolated immigrant Germans. The definitive study of the clash between the two trends of Lutheranism in the period is Vergilius Ferm's Crisis in American Lutheranism and Old Lutheranism (New York: Century, 1927). This does not, however, prove that the confessional immigrant tide defeated American Lutheranism. In fact, in Charles Porterfield Krauth, the articulate spokesman for confessionalism, we deal with a man who simply does not fit the "Cultural Lag" theory.

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[1] There are no satisfactory histories of Iowa, Buffalo, or Ohio. Nor is there any good history of the Missouri Synod, though the founding period is superbly studied in Forster's _Zion on the Mississippi_. The Norwegians have been the best studied. For the early period, see J. Magnus Rohne's _Norwegian American Lutheranism up to 1872_ (New York: Macmillan, 1926). For a less careful but more imaginative interpretation which says something also about the larger subject, see Nelson and Fevold's, _The Lutheran Church Among Norwegian-Americans_.

Obviously the whole problem is open to no easy solution. A more adequate explanation (if indeed there can be any one explanation) which, however, needs more research including sociological research, probably lies in the observation that the Lutherans here found themselves in a totally strange and alien culture. The problem of survival and self-identity became severe especially on the frontier where the form of Protestantism encountered in the nineteenth century was overwhelmingly of a low church, revivalistic, decision-centered evangelicalism. Added to this the Lutherans found themselves in a cultural situation different from anything they knew and of which "Methodism" seemed to be the cultural expression and extension. The anti-intellectualism, too, was pervasive as well as the accompanying simplitism. Nor had the Lutherans ever lived in a pluralistic society (though this pluralism is perhaps something of a myth) with a free church tradition. And they were faced with the pressing problem of gathering together the scattered, uneducated immigrants and molding them into a cohesive and loyal group. Self-identity and indoctrination became acute problems. And here, just as in Europe in the battle against rationalism, the need for self-identity could be served by the highly articulate, precise, logical, and unambiguous orthodoxy of the seventeenth century. Here ready-made answers were provided. For indoctrination purposes, too, it made for a system that could be easily taught and learned. Confessional orthodoxy imported from Europe would have died as all "isms" die if they lose relevance to life had it not beenthat properly modified (as in church polity) it suited so well what was needed here.[1] Then we have, not "cultural lag" at all, but a peculiar form of adaptation to culture. The real "Americanists" may well have been the confessionalists who achieved just the simple, clear-cut, teachable approach called for. Precisely, too, such things as the high church hierarchical tendencies of European Old Lutheranism were dropped here.

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[1] Koehler in a sense makes this point. He speaks frequently, for instance, of "what the American situation called for." of Adolph Hoenecke he says, "He stayed [in America] and worked himself into the theology that the American situation called for." "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XIII (March, 1940), p. 12.

Koehler is of considerable help in illustrating what happened here to a man who could not fit the system that developed. That Koehler's case happened in the Wisconsin Synod is partly beside the point. That is, if it is true that Lutheran orthodoxy here has been characterized by a desire for simple answers, an easy-to-teach system, and that it calls for clear distinctions between black and white, if it wants to reduce all issues to simple solutions, then Koehler was quite obviously not in keeping with what was called for. His continuous demand for self-criticism, his examination of the content under the form, his re-examination and reformulation of traditional views, his pointing to the ambiguous character of much of life and theology, his historical consciousness, what appeared as a relativism, and his lack of synodical chauvinism, were all of them of considerable inconvenience and confusion to his brethren and were quite different from what dominated the environment.[1] Above all, the very complicated and many-sided Protestant Controversy which led to Koehler's ousting is a relevant case study. In essence Koehler was ousted precisely because he could not accept and approve of the simple, one-sided, and thus inadequate solution arrived at by the Synod.

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[1] In some respects the "Heresy Trials" that took place

4. It is no overstatement to assert that we have only begun to take seriously the history of Lutheranism in America. Relatively little of a scholarly nature has so far been undertaken and whole areas of the story have hardly been touched. Thus we need many and varied "little" studies in depth which may help to make it possible someday to write a definitive and interpretive history of Lutheranism in America. At present we simply lack the resources, and James Hastings Nichols correctly points out that, as with the Catholics, the necessary groundwork has simply not been done.[1]

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in the Synod of the Northwest of the United Lutheran Church in 1955, are analogous to Koehler's problem with the Wisconsin Synod. Simple black and white positions were called for and the church was unable to cope with the basic issues involved. See the Kilde article in Christianity and Crisis. For a protest against the methodology and a call to theological reorientation, see George Forell's address delivered at the special meeting of the Synod of the Northwest in Minneapolis, January 26, 1956. Unpublished but available. There are remarkable analogies between this and the Koehler case and both help to throw light on the orthodoxy that has dominated Lutheranism in America.

[1] Unpublished typewritten manuscript, American Scholarship in the History of Christianity, 1930-1960, p. 67.

Thus it is that Abdel Wentz' attempt at such a history in 1955 shows in its bibliography relatively little progress since the third edition of J. P. Neve's *History of the Lutheran Church in America* (Burlington, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1934). The latter, too, while not nearly as interesting or as well-written as Wentz, is in some respects distinctly superior in that it at least takes seriously the controversies which have plagued the groups. Nor does Neve force his material to fit a certain ideology.

Whole areas of the Lutheran story have hardly been touched. Thus, for instance, one wants to know the meaning of the undeniable adjustment to American life, but at this point precisely that work which most stresses assimilation is of almost no help in understanding it. Because Wentz wants to see the whole as a success story he overstresses the early Eastern Lutherans, plays down the crisis over *American Lutheranism*, deals superficially with Midwestern American Lutheranism and concentrates throughout on proving Lutheranism's American character. But what does the latter mean and what does it say about the "success story" that Wentz tells? May it not tell the story rather of a church captive to its culture? At any rate, the meaning of all this cannot be arrived at until a good deal more work has been done. Very suggestive, however, is a book by Paul Spaude, which also documents assimilation but documents it as a story of failure.[1] This is, to be sure, in many respects a poor book, nagging and disagreeable in tone, defending a reactionary obscurantism, and seeing almost nothing but a dismal story of selling one's birthright for a mess of pottage. Yet the point remains that all this is well-documented and does get at one side to the story, and for us, might be suggestive in seeing also the conservative orthodoxy in the form it took here as part of the same story of adjustment to culture.

We need not only document the triumph of orthodoxy, but more importantly perhaps, find some explanation for its remarkable success. How can we account for the rigidity with which confessionalism was held, yet at the same time the successful adjustment which Missouri, the most conservative of all the groups, could make at some points? What accounts for Missouri's movement from glory to glory while Buffalo only went from bad to worse? Or why could orthodoxy be so successful among the Germans, while it always had such hard going among the Norwegians?[2] These and a number of other significant questions only point up the need for a more thorough study.

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[1] Spaude, Paul, The Lutheran Church under American Influence. (Burlington, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1943).

[2] There is no question but that the Norwegians had an extremely difficult time on this score. Even after the Election Controversy the Norwegian Synod (the "orthodox" group) simply could not achieve what Missouri achieved. See, for instance, the valiant but unsuccessful attempt to maintain parochial schools, or the difficulty the Norwegians had keeping

We need, too, solid studies of the specific synods. The Norwegians have by all odds been best covered; so well, in fact, that a worthwhile over-all history could be written by E. Clifford Nelson and Eugene Fevold.[1] The German groups have fared badly. There is J. P. Koehler's scholarly work on Wisconsin but even that for the period after 1900 consists largely of his personal observations of Synod life rather than a connected study, partly because it was completed after his removal from the Synod when he had no archives available to work in. Missouri, however, is very poorly covered, although there are excellent studies of certain aspects of its life, as the Forster work, or Theodore Bachmann's Rise of "Missouri Lutheranism." (Ph.D. dissertation, Chicago,

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"pure congregations" on the lodge issue. Even the ultra-conservatives, the small minority that in 1917 refused to enter the merged Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, could neither maintain successful parochial schools nor keep pure from lodgery. For a spirited defense of this orthodoxy but which is at the same time unwittingly a documentation of its failure, see Grace for Grace, a Brief History of the Norwegian Synod (Mankato, Minnesota: Lutheran Synod Book.Co., 1943).

[1] Among such studies, in addition to those cited, are Eugene L. Fevold's History of Norwegian-American Lutheranism, 1870-1890 (Ph.D. dissertation, Chicago, 1951), and Gerhard Belgum's The Old Norwegian Synod in America, 1853-1890 (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale, 1957), which though available, was unfortunately not made any serious use of by Nelson and Fevold.

1946), or Carl Mauelshagen's in many ways inadequate and outdated American Lutheranism Surrenders to Forces of Conservatism (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia, 1936).[1]

Several significant men from within these synods deserve study. Certainly C. F. W. Walther stands in need of thorough study, since he is without any doubt the giant of Midwestern American Lutheranism and more than any other man charted the course it was to pursue, as he molded not only an entire synod but deeply influenced a whole kind of Lutheranism. To date, however, while his stature is recognized, next to nothing of a scholarly nature has been done on him.[2] Neither has any critical study of Franz Pieper been made. Whatever one thinks of Pieper, whose static Biblicism, naive primitivism, and inability to understand other positions are very hard to sympathize with, much less take seriously today, the fact remains that his influence has been enormous and he is, in fact, the personification of the theology of Midwestern American Lutheranism.[1] And there are several other men who deserve attention, such as the Iowa Synod's very substantial Johann Michael Reu, who in some respects was similar to John Philip Koehler, a study of whom would contribute to our understanding of the Lutheran story.

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[1] Mauelshagen's assessment, for instance, of Walther has been partly invalidated by Forster's research.

[2] For a recognition of his stature, see pages 272-279 of Sidney Ahlstrom's "Theology in America." The Shaping of American Religion, Vol. I of Religion in American Life (Princeton: Princeton University, 1961). A good study of Walther and the founding of the Missouri Synod, is found in Forster. For a beginning at an analysis of Walther's theology, see Robert Schultz' Gesetz und Evangelium in der Lutherische Theologie des 19 Jahrunderts (Berlin, Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1963). The existing biographies of Walther are by disciples who are more loyal than critical.

Especially noteworthy is the dearth of careful studies of the intersynodical controversies. These are of great importance not only because of the specific doctrines involved but even more importantly because they can help us to understand from the inside the intentions of these orthodox Lutherans, their psychology (as revealed, for instance, in the violence of the polemics) as well as the determinative force of the common methodology. The Church-Ministry conflict, for instance, involving especially Missouri, Iowa, and Buffalo, would be revealing. And the Election Controversy, although the quantity of literature is enormous and easily available, has been almost entirely neglected.[2]

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[1] Adolph Hoenecke, while belonging to the same theological school, was probably a more substantial and certainly a more historical dogmatician. At the same time his influence has in no sense been comparable to Pieper's.

[2] Where it has been studied it has generally been as a side issue. Thus E. Clifford Nelson does, to be sure, pay

The story of the life and death of the Wauwatosa Theology and of John Philip Koehler is at least one of these "little" studies that can contribute to the whole. But it is also more than a "little" study, since it represents a valiant and imaginative, even if unsuccessful, attempt to reorient the course of Midwestern American Lutheranism, and that in a manner which in no sense fits the typical "liberal-conservative" dichotomy which even yet so pervades Lutheran thought in America, nor which fits a search for a "middle way", which may be nothing but an opportunistic theology of expediency, but which is rather a search for a different way to do theology and thus, too, for the life of the Church to be lived.

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a good deal of attention to it, but since his major interest is in the union movement, the Election Controversy furnishes only the cause that produced disunity. Moreover, the significance of the controversy is so much different among the Norwegians that, while part of the same conflict, the Norwegian reaction to it took quite a different turn and does not help much in the German Lutheran story.

Chapter II

THE WISCONSIN SYNOD TO 1900, AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE WAUWATOSA THEOLOGY

Since the 1830's, a large-scale movement of emigration to America had arisen in Germany. Some of these Germans found their way to Wisconsin, and by the 1840's and 1850's large numbers of Germans were in Wisconsin. Many of these were from southern Germany and were thus Catholics. However, there were also sizeable groups of Lutherans from Pomerania and Brandenburg, and by the latter 1840's, all parts of Germany were represented in Wisconsin. Settlements of Lutherans were found at such places as Milwaukee, Watertown, La Crosse, Sheboygan, Manitowoc, and Green Bay. Among these groups were the people who were to become the founders and constituency of the Wisconsin Synod.[1]

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[1] There will be no attempt in this study to provide any detailed or original study of the history of the Synod as such, but only briefly to survey its development insofar as it provides a necessary background for the study of the *Wauwatosa Theology*. Koehler's *Geschichte der Allgemeinen Evangelische-Lutherische Synode* is an excellent source study and is especially valuable for its careful study of the European antecedents of the group and its early period in Wisconsin. The English translation of Koehler's work as it appeared in monthly installments in *Faith-Life* from 1938 to 1943, constitutes both a revision and a completion of the *Geschichte*, which carried the story only up to about 1860. The English

The pastors who were to organize the Synod did not arrive in Wisconsin until the latter 1840's and early 1850's. To understand these men, their conception of church work, and what they looked for in a Lutheran synod, it is necessary to know something of their background and training, and to realize, too, that their conception of church work and life had been molded by a particular European context and problem, a different context than that which produced the Old Lutherans. The former had quite a different theological orientation, although both groups to some extent directed their energies to the common problem of rationalism's effect upon Christianity.[1]

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work is in many respects superior (in spite of the very bad quality of the English), not because of additional documentation or research, but because Koehler was freer in his interpretations and more open in his analysis of the men involved. The English work, since it was composed after Koehler's alienation from the Synod, is not hindered by being in any sense an official history. Continuing in His Word represents for the early period a fairly satisfactory general survey and is quite obviously based on Koehler's work, although no credit is given.

[1] In this alone a notable difference comes out between this movement and the nineteenth century Old Lutheran movement. Both movements in the nineteenth century fought rationalism, at least of the crasser sort. The Old Lutherans, however, while also tending in some respects toward pietism (as see, for instance,the backgrounds of the Missouri Synod founders) and inclined toward an individualistic ethic and religion, took their rise specifically in a reaction against the corrosive effects of rationalism rather than in a reaction against orthodoxy. Thus the Old Lutherans, in sharp contrast to the mission society people, advocated a return to the theology of orthodoxy. Thus the term "repristinationists" applied to them.

Already in the eighteenth century there had existed mission societies in England and Scotland. By the latter part of the century such societies existed also in Germany, where pietism, as a reaction against "dead orthodoxy" offered a fertile field for their growth.

> By 1788, the society known later as the "Deutsche Christentums-gesellschaft" was founded with headquarters in Basel. Its declaration of principles contains this characteristic statement: "Our purpose is that in the days when men seek to weaken the foundations of Christianity, the Christians of all confessions must be kept together. . ." Out of the Deutsche Christentums-gesellschaft in Basel there grew in 1815. . .the Baseler Missionsgesellschaft . . .Originally the intention had been to prepare missionaries to work in Africa only, but in the early thirties of the nineteenth century. . .they began to take an active interest in the gathering together of the Protestant Christians in the Central Western states, including Wisconsin.[1]

Soon after similar societies came into being, and in 1828, several societies joined to organize the Vereinigte Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft. Within this group there was a special society known as the Evangelische Gesellschaft fuer Nordamerika. Headquarters were at Barmen and there, too, was a training center for missionaries. From this group came the men who were destined to found and to determine the early orientation of the Wisconsin Synod.

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[1] Continuing in His Word, pp. 11-12. For a full discussion of this and the other mission societies that affected the Wisconsin Synod, see "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XI, Faith-Life (July, 1938), pp. 6-11. Here, too, the problem of joint Lutheran-Reformed work, which was to become such an issue in the early days of the Wisconsin Synod, is discussed.

For a complete study of the Barmen mission group one must consult Koehler. It is sufficient to point out that in the mission school which had been founded in 1826 to prepare men for practical service as pastors and missionaries, the emphasis was on practical subjects and Bible study. Relatively little attention was paid to the dialective of systematic theology and in keeping with German pietism and pietism in general the confessional side of Lutheranism was not emphasized. The students came from Lutheran, Reformed, and United backgrounds.[1]

By 1837, two men who had been trained at Barmen were ready to go to America under the sponsorship of the Evangelische Gesellschaft (generally referred to as the Langenberger Society). One of these men was John Muehlhaeuser, destined to become the founding father of the Wisconsin Synod.

After several years in New York, where he served parishes belonging to the General Synod, Muehlhaeuser came in 1848 to Milwaukee. There he was joined by two other Barmen-trained men, John Weinmann and W. Wrede. These three met December 8, 1849, at Grace Lutheran Church in Milwaukee to form Die Erste Deutsch Evangelische-Lutherische Synode von Wisconsin. The first meeting of the Synod took place May 26, 1850, at Granville, Wisconsin. At this meeting a constitution was drafted.

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[1] Neither is there any indication that the ethical rigorism and legalism that often accompanied pietism were prominent at Barmen. Certainly the "beer picnics" so common in the Wisconsin congregations founded by the early men from Barmen would not indicate a strong ascetic atmosphere.

The constitution was drafted by Muehlhaeuser and is interesting for at least two reasons, its attitude over against the laity and its confessional basis.[1] The constitution, as might be expected, is clear in giving preferences to the ministerial group and treats the laity as not yet having reached their maturity. The later Wauwatosa ideal of all Christians as equal beings and priests before God and its subsequent protest against the clergy-lay dichotomy was not part of Muehlhaeuser's thinking, probably because he had not been exposed to it, since his leanings otherwise might well have inclined him toward a democratic emphasis at this point.[2]

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[1] A copy is found in Koehler's Geschichte, pp. 189-191, and an English translation in "The History of the Wisconsin Synod," XII (January, 1939), p. 11.

[2] Interestingly, this ideal waited for formulation by the confessionalists, especially the Missourians led by Walther. The less confessional Eastern Lutherans had, on the other hand, what must appear to anyone coming from the Missourian tradition, as an unduly exalted idea of the clerical office and of clerical dominance in synodical polity. It must also be noted, however, that Missouri's low-church view of the ministry never went along with a despisal of a learned ministry as was true in the anti-intellectual atmosphere of so much of nineteenth century American Protestantism. Nor would

The confessional emphasis at this point is especially noteworthy. Muehlhaeuser was no orthodoxist and had, in fact, an aversion to the precise doctrinal formulations of the Old Lutherans and obviously shared the common view of the General Synod, that their stress upon pure doctrine came close to zealotry and bigotry and a mere striving about words.[1] Then, too, there are indications that his private dealings with the Old Lutherans made him feel that they were harsh, unloving, and legalistic. How much of this was justified we have no way of knowing, although it is certain that there was often an unattractive quality in the way the Old Lutherans tended to deal with men and issues.[2] There

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it be correct to overstress the Missourian conception as a contribution of Old Lutheranism, as see the difference between Missouri, Iowa, and Buffalo, all thoroughly Old Lutheran. The Missourian conception was not brought along but was a modification in America.

The Wisconsin Synod became Missourian on the doctrine of the ministry, and the Wauwatosa Theology was to subject even the Missourian view to criticism as having legalistic tendencies and as being overly externalized.

[1] See, for instance, "The History of the Wisconsin Synod," XII (August, 1939), pp. 4-9, which furnishes a good characterization of the intent and viewpoint of Muehlhaeuser and his associates.

[2] The heavy polemics of the period are permeated by accusations that frequently are grossly exaggerated. See, for instance, the polemical material in Der Lutheraner (St. Louis: 1844 -), or in Lehre und Wehre. The sweeping judgments are not only typical of Missourian polemics.

was, likewise, on the other side, frequently an unwillingness to accept rebuke and correction for even obvious instances of sound Lutheran practice violated.[1]

At any rate, Muehlhaeuser's constitution is from a confessional point of view a distinct improvement over the constitution of the General Synod.[2] The constitution of Muehlhaeuser did require a high form of confessional subscription, in that all candidates for the ministry were to pledge themselves to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. The fact that this was definitely stated meant that in the coming fight for confessional Lutheranism the promoters of the latter were able to point to Muehlhaeuser's constitution as expressing the intent even if not always the practice of the Synod's founding fathers.

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[1] An example of such a refusal and the subsequent identification of orthodox practice with bigotry comes out in a letter found in "The History of the Wisconsin Synod," XIII (February, 1940), pp. 11-12.

[2] This latter constitution is discussed in Ferm's Crisis in American Lutheranism. The constitution involved no real subscription to the Lutheran confessions. That this was intentional is seen, for instance, in the fact that in spite of sharp attack from the Tennessee Synod, the General Synod men referred to this approach as American Lutheranism (not only using the term then in connection with the movement under Schmucker that went by that name), by which they meant watered-down and questionable Lutheranism. See "The History of the Wisconsin Synod," XII (September, 1939), pp. 10-11.

The work of Muehlhaeuser and his associates was characterized by a relaxed theological position that included a general laxity in practice. This formlessness was, of course, the direct opposite of the emphasis of the Missourians with whom the Wisconsin men soon came into contact and conflict.[1] One indication of this general laxity was the policy of soliciting funds from outside circles, when self-support would not only have been a better policy theologically and served as better training in building a self-supporting church, but would also have removed one occasion for criticism from the more orthodox synods.[2] The point again is that Muehlhaeuser's position was quite obviously not so much anti-confessional as it was formless, vague, and given to improvisation.

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[1] For the care with which the Missourians avoided laxity and improvisations and the extent to which this forced them to prescribe proper action for almost any foreseeable problems, see C. F. W. Walther's Amerikanische-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie (St. Louis: Synod von Missouri, 1872). For the seriousness with which all this was taken by the clergy, see in the announcements of Missouri Synod pastoral conferences as printed in Der Lutheraner over the years, the invariable inclusion in the program of Casualia. The practice continues even today and invites pastors with "cases" to seek the advice of the brethren. The Wauwatosa Theology discouraged the practice and one finds relatively little reference to it in the conference programs of the Wisconsin Synod in the 1920's, as printed in The Northwestern Lutheran and the Gemeindeblatt, except in announcements of "mixed" conferences (joint Missouri-Wisconsin conferences).

[2] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XII (November, 1930), p. 12. The quotation from Der Lutheraner runs in part, "The preachers of the Wisconsin Synod like to gather to themselves a crowd of all kinds of people, the worst of it is that they are not very scrupulous in the choice of means to augment their numbers. . . That [outside support] is what the Wisconsin Synod depends upon. . .for such members as they have do not contribute very liberally to the kingdom of God."

Muehlhaeuser continued to keep in close contact with individual pastors in Germany and with the Langenberg Society until 1868, by which time the parting of the ways had become quite definite.[1] Until that time pastors continued to come from Barmen and considerable financial help came from the Pennsylvania Synod.[2] None of this encouraged improvement in the group's doctrinal position, least of all the high regard in which Muehlhaeuser held Samuel Schmucker, for forty years the most influential man in the General Synod and the exponent of American Lutheranism, as well as the author of the famous Definite Synodical Platform, the reaction to which became a major issue in the course of Lutheranism here in America and which also figured in the confessional problem within the Wisconsin Synod.[3]

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[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod, XIII (May, 1940), pp. 5-8.

[2] Continuing in His Word, p. 17.

[3] See Ferm's Crisis in American Lutheranism. Ferm's strong sympathy with Schmucker's strong bias against Old Lutheranism colors the story, though it is a sound study and remains the only real study of Schmucker's brand of Lutheranism. For an excellent examination of Schmucker's type of theological emphasis from the larger perspective of the nineteenth century American Protestantism, see James Hastings Nichols' Romanticism in American Theology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), especially chapter V.

The Lutheranism of the General Synod might well have become the pattern for the Wisconsin Synod had it not been for the advent between 1854 and 1856 of Philip Koehler (the father of J. P. Koehler), W. Streissguth, and E. Reim. These men became the articulate leaders in the confessional movement. They, too, had been trained at Barmen, but the situation there had changed considerably from what it was during Muehlhaeuser's student days. In 1848, Johann Christian Wallmann, who had been educated at Halle under Friedrich August Tholuck, who from 1826 to 1877 was professor of theology at the University of Halle and who in his anti-rationalism pointed especially to the theology of the Lutheran Reformation, came to Barmen as a teacher. Wallmann's students became motivated by a zeal for the Lutheran confessions and developed a highly critical (but not necessarily a separatistic attitude, as was the case with the Saxon group that constituted the beginning of the Missouri Synod) attitude toward the Prussian Union.[1] To Wallmann's influence belongs to a large extent the shift in the doctrinal position of the Wisconsin Synod.[1]

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[1] For the separatistic tendencies of the "Stephanites," who constituted the beginnings of the Missouri Synod, see Forster's Zion on the Mississippi. The doctrine of "unionism" which has so typified Missouri's approach to fellowship has its background in this tendency, where clear-cut Scripture proofs had to be found to justify withdrawal from the heterodox state churches. Seen in this context, Missouri's doctrine and what it does to specific passages, as for instance, Romans 16:17-18, becomes less of an eccentricity, although at the same time the exegeses of this and other passages have distinctly sectarian overtones.

The 1856 meeting of the Synod marked the turn in the direction it was going to travel, for here the Synod was forced to determine whether to follow the lead of an approach that aimed at being broadly Protestant and interested in joint Lutheran-Reformed activity or by self-conscious decision to follow a distinctly Lutheran path. As it was, the Definite Platform, sponsored by S. Schmucker, B. Kuntz, S. Sprecker, and The Lutheran Observer, was discussed and a unanimous stand taken against it.[2] Among other things, it was stated that the "Unaltered Augsburg Confession was founded upon the word of God and that the adoption of the Definite Platform meant suicide for the Lutheran Church."[3] This fight against the Definite Platform was led by E. Reim and Philip

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[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XII (April, 1939), p. 11. As noted earlier, there is nothing to indicate that the change came from contact with the Missouri Synod. The transition, while having its genesis in the European background, became influenced in its form, of course, by the Missouri Synod as well as by the American situation and what that called for. Both the European change at Barmen and the influence of E. Reim, P. Koehler, W. Streissguth, and the Nordwestliche Konferenz of the Synod are covered in Koehler. Ibid., XII (April, May, 1939), pp. 13-15, 14-16.

[2] Continuing in His Word, p. 17.

[3] Ibid.

Koehler, and Muehlhaeuser went along with it.[1] It meant the parting of the ways between confessionalism and articulate and determined unionism, and it spelled the doom, too, and that in spite of the fact that the Definite Platform was defeated in Schmucker's own synod, to any possible rapprochement between Wisconsin and the General Synod.

While all this is true it also remains true, as has been pointed out, that however steadily the confessional point of view began now to permeate the Synod, it was a long time before it lived up to the standards of Missouri, Ohio, Iowa, or Buffalo.

The founding of Northwestern College in 1865, illustrates something of the confusion that continued to exist within the Synod even nine years after the decision against the Definite Platform.

> In the public announcement of the opening of the School it was modestly referred to as "The Lutheran College in Watertown," but the second announcement, appearing three months later, already gave it the more grandiose name of "Wisconsin University and Grammar School. . ." The following phrases appeared in an advertisement signed by

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[1] Ibid., pp. 17-18. Philip Koehler at the time stated, "The Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin is Lutheran and desires to become more Lutheran. We desire to depart from the unrighteousness of appearing to be something that we are not."

> President Martin: "The University offers opportunities for a thorough and complete course of collegiate education equal to any in the land. . ." This was noble language, but it must be conceded that it was an exaggerated description of a combined college and high school with three teachers and a total of 66 students, all of high school grade.[1]

This announcement was quite obviously more than a case of premature enthusiasm or innocent provincialism. It also expressed a point of view that was consciously attempting to copy the typical American college under some kind of broad Protestant auspices, as such colleges were developing and proliferating at this time.[2] The idea of creating a college as an extension of the church and with the special aim of preparing men for theological thought was foreign to Martin. He was motivated by less humble aims and sought, for instance, to recruit students from outside circles by playing down the German character of the school and by minimizing in his advertising the Lutheran character of the institution. There were also appeals for financial aid from people outside the church, and teachers were sought by advertising in public journals and by contacts with the Eastern Lutherans.[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 165.

[2] The spirit motivating the founding of the College is carefully examined by Koehler and it becomes apparent that at this point, as well as at others, the Wisconsin Synod of the period was far different from the orthodox synods of the time. Thus Adam Martin, the first president, could say, "A college in the American sense of the word is an institution for a so-called higher education. It is in no sense a European university nor a German Gymnasium, but a peculiarly American scholastic institution that. . .concerns itself more with the needs of practical life, in that it aims at a higher education that is closely fitted to the local conditions of our land, including all that which this requires, and excluding all that which is foreign to it. ... That denomination of church will become best known, and put its peculiar stamp on the life of the people, that does most in the way of educating the prominent men of the land." "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XIII (June, 1940), p. 12. Typically, too, the talk was given in English, although German was the language of the group and many could not even handle the English. For an example of how far this diverged from the ideals of the orthodox synods of the Midwest, see Karen Larsen's Laur Larsen, Pioneer College President. (Northfield, Minnesota: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1936). For Larsen's judgment on "Yankee colleges" and their "humbug", see p. 187.

However, it is also noteworthy that when a change did come at Northwestern College it brought with it a somewhat different ideal from that of the synods with which Wisconsin increasingly "fellowshipped." In 1869 Augustus Ernst came to the faculty, soon became its president, and continued as such until 1919. He had received his training in the German *Gymnasium* and at the University of Goettingen and the thorough scholarship of the German university of the nineteenth century remained his ideal throughout the 50 years of his presidency. He had a strong personality with a wide range of knowledge of literature, the classics, and philosophy, a keen dialectical talent and the ability to create enthusiasm for learning in his students.[1]

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[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XIII (June, 1940), pp. 8-14. Adam Martin was a graduate of Hartwick Seminary and his ideals were those of the Eastern Lutherans of the General Synod. After leaving Watertown in 1869, he returned East and served as professor at Pennsylvania College at Gettysburg. The whole early story of Northwestern College is an interesting commentary on the looseness of the Wisconsin Synod, which in spite of its growing conservatism, hardly fit the context of Midwestern American Lutheranism.

> When President Ernst took over the reins that guided the institution there was no more wavering. . . . He was not primarily a theologian. He was a schoolman, and a very able one.
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[1] *Ibid*., XIII (October, 1940), pp. 8-9. "Professor Ernst was not of a creative bent or inclined to pursue original paths in learning and shaped the school accordingly. The field of art was foreign to him. . . But he had an adaptable mind, and the true, good, and beautiful that came within his range was readily absorbed by him. . . Ernst was highly gifted and pedagogically well-equipped. . . We did get an idea of mental processes. We learned that logic does not deal with the content but the method of thinking, and that the facts that our thought in any given case is concerned with must be known before you can decide whether or not conception of the facts is logical. . . . It also dawned on us that language, with all its forms, is applied logic and psychology; hence, that the interpretation of language requires an understanding of the conceptions underlying the speech of another, and thus an effort of the mind, the will, and the heart as well when trying to understand the words of each other." Koehler's high praise of Ernst is especially noteworthy since Ernst became a sharp critic of some of the tendencies of the *Wauwatosa Theology*. Here Koehler credits Ernst with teaching a conception of communication that became a determined conviction of his own theology, i.e., a man must be understood as he wants to be understood and, not only according to the bare *Wortlaut*. Koehler's high estimate of Ernst is interestingly verified by a former student of Ernst who later became highly critical of the whole theological tendency of the Wisconsin Synod and consequently withdrew from its fellowship. Thus the Librarian's office at St. Olaf College contains in its file a glowing tribute to Ernst written by the former St. Olaf Librarian, Ole Felland, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Ernst's presidency. Here again it is Ernst's emphasis upon mental processes and means of communication that are singled out.

> When the school settled down to the unglamorous work of directly serving the Synod and confined its appeals to the members of the congregations, its continued existence was arrived. . . There was no longer any chance or any intention of its becoming the "biggest and the best," but it was going to live and serve Christ and His Church faithfully and humbly. . . The local newspaper ceased to cast bouquets in the direction of the college hill. . . It now knew what its calling was and the faculty, the policies, and the curriculum combined to serve the church according to that calling.[1]

The educational program at Northwestern College is important, since the writer is convinced that, at least in part, it helps to explain the greater individualism within the Wisconsin Synod in contrast to what was true in the Missouri, Ohio, or Buffalo Synods. And, of course, J. P. Koehler credited his own escape from the strait jacket of scholastic dogmatics partly precisely to the influence of his teachers at Northwestern College. It is true, too, that the curriculum at Northwestern College was in certain rather important ways more broadly conceived than was generally true among the other synods of the Midwest.[2]

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[1] Continuing in His Word, pp. 160-161. An examination of the catalogs before and after the beginning of Ernst's presidency illustrate a drastic change in conception and program.

[2] This generalization is somewhat challenged by the curriculum of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, which from its beginning in 1861, was solidly in the tradition of the classical humanistic tradition of Europe. Like Ernst, Luther's first president, Laur Larsen, had a European university training. See David T. Nelson's Luther College, 1861-1961 (Decorah, Iowa: Luther College, 1961), especially chapter III.

The new ideals of Northwestern College aimed at a Christian school in the direct service of the church and with special attention to preparing students for the seminary. In this respect it was identical to the schools of the other synods. However, and here a certain divergence became clear, Ernst's idea was not so much a specialized pretheological program as a classical humanistic liberal arts training in a Christian atmosphere and motivated by the Gospel, and in no sense was it conceived to be a kind of minor seminary. Ernst spoke of his desire to "put all human gifts to service in the Kingdom of God."[1] And he insisted that what the students needed was not preprofessional training but "eine ordentliche Gymnasialbildung."[2] This involved a defense of the classical curriculum, not so much because Latin and Greek were necessary tools for Biblical studies, although certainly they are that, but because these are means to approach the language, literature, and thought of the classical world and lead thus to an intimate acquaintance with the thought and culture of two great civilizations of the past through the very tangible media of these languages.[1]

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[1] Herman, Arthur. Our Northwestern College, translated by H. K. Moussa (Watertown, Wisconsin: 1915), p. 48.

[2] Ibid., p. 49.

Northwestern College set a pattern which was quite different from that of the other German synods of the Midwest. Especially is the contrast clear in the case of the schools of the Missouri Synod, since they too were organized after the pattern of the German Gymnasium (except that the latter had only one prima class and thus a six-year rather than a seven- or eight-year course, nor did they thus grant bachelor degrees), but they were conceived more as schools to provide tools for theological study, and the whole educational outlook was considerably narrower as well as more concerned with what was directly relevant to theology.[2] The Missouri Synod schools have been quite utilitarian. The general Missourian notion seemed to be that the only purpose, for instance, of foreign language study was to enable students to read the Bible, the Church fathers, and Luther in the original. Nor was the conception of education any broader at the schools of the Ohio or Iowa Synods.[1] And while all these schools cultivated Latin and Greek, their differences were quite pronounced. The extreme in narrow professionalization and fear of a humanistic education was perhaps realized at Augsburg College and Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota, where the whole educational program from the prep school through the seminary was frankly regarded as an integrated educational program to train ministers. Thus, the whole constituted a divinity school, while broader conceptions of education as well as the traditional European pattern were stigmatized as "humanist."[2]

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[1] All through Ernst's presidency the catalogs of the College defended Latin and Greek as required subjects precisely at this point. Until very recent years the catalog statements for both languages remained the same. Even today a part of the statement about Latin is retained from Ernst's days, "The course in Latin is designed to achieve. . . an intimate acquaintance with the thought and culture of one of the greatest civilizations of the past through its most tangible medium, the Latin language." Catalog of Northwestern College for the Year 1962-1963, p. 21.

[2] This is obvious from the catalog of the Missouri Synod Concordias (of which there are several serving different areas of the Synod and all preparing students for the Concordia Theological Seminary at St. Louis). These have been printed since the 1880's and are available in annual volumes binding the several together. Educational Institutions of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, 1885-1930. All have been bound to precisely identical curricula, which meant that all Missouri Synod pastors received identical training. Even today this

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remains true and also remains true that the emphasis is heavy upon subjects directly relevant to theology, i.e., "New Testament Greek," "Theological German," "Church Latin." Catalog of Concordia Senior College, Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1960-1961.

[1] Catalogs, 1880-1930, from Capital University, Columbus, Ohio; from Wartburg College of the Iowa Synod (at various locations until 1935, when it merged with Wartburg Normal School at Waverly, Iowa); and from St. Paul, Luther College, St. Paul, Minnesota.

[2] Nelson, E. Clifford. The Union Movement Among Norwegian-American Lutherans, pp. 312-315. The Lutheran Free Church, while not "orthodox" was at this point only more thoroughgoing than the Missouri Synod. Both, in effect, rejected the humanistic tradition in education.

It seems clear that the educational ideals that motivated Northwestern College are important for a study of the Wauwatosa Theology, especially insofar as J. P. Koehler personifies it. The broad humanistic base of the educational program served as a healthy balance to the increasingly orthodox character of the Synod, and allowed for a type of orthodoxy to develop that was flexible and alert to life and language at the same time as it was confessional and consciously conservative.

During the same time that the College was being established, the growth in confessionalism was continuing. The period itself was, of course, for all of American Lutheranism one of increasing orthodoxy but Wisconsin, like the Eastern Lutherans, had further to go to achieve orthodoxy than did the Missouri, Ohio, Iowa, Buffalo, or Norwegian Synods.

In 1860, John Muehlhaeuser retired from the presidency of the Synod, and was succeeded by Johann Bading, who had been trained under J. C. Wallmann at Barmen, Germany, and who along with P. Koehler, E. Reim, W. Streissguth, was a leader in the confessional movement.[1] The following ten years, 1860-1870, not only led to a stronger conservatism, but also to a concordat with the Missouri Synod.[1]

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[1] "Bading, Reim, and Koehler not only knew Lutheran doctrine but clung to it. However, it is especially noteworthy that these ministers did not stand on their office, as was too generally the case among the Old Lutherans." "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XXII (August, 1939), p. 5.

The early contacts with the German mission groups had continued but with increasingly less enthusiasm on both sides. In 1867, the Synod broke with these groups and thus received no more help from Germany. At about the same time the Synod was forced to take a stand over against the General Council. In view of the generally conservative character of the Council, which had, of course, arisen as a reaction against the General Synod and especially the reception given to the dubiously Lutheran Franckean Synod by the General Synod, it is only natural that there was strong sympathy for the General Council among the Wisconsin leaders.[2]

In November, 1867, the first regular convention of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of North America was held at Fort Wayne, Indiana. Eleven synods participated in this convention as members of the new organization: The Ministerium of Pennsylvania, the English Synod of Ohio, the Pittsburgh Synod, the Wisconsin Synod, the English District Synod of Ohio, the Michigan Synod, the Augustana Synod, the Minnesota Synod, the Canada Synod, and the Illinois Synod.[1]

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[1] _Ibid_., XIII (May, 1940), pp. 5-12. This section documents also the parting of the ways with the German mission groups.

[2] For a general discussion of the formation of the General Council, see Wentz, Chapter XIX. For the doctrinal position of the General Council, see _Proceedings of the Convention Held by Representatives from Various Evangelical Lutheran Synods in the United States and Canada Accepting the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, at Reading, Pa., December 12, 13, and 14, A.D., 1866_. (Philadelphia: 1867), pp. 12-14. For a theological statement of the form of Lutheranism envisioned by the founders of the General Council, see Charles Porterfield Krauth's classic, _The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology_ (Philadelphia: General Council, 1899).

Thus, not only was Wisconsin an original member but so were Michigan and Minnesota, both of which later became constituent members of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States. Both the Iowa and Ohio Synods refused to join the General Council, as did also the Missouri Synod, which had withdrawn from the preliminary meetings because of the General Council's failure to come up to its minimum demands of orthodoxy. This came out into the open over the question of the Four Points, that is, disagreement with the General Council's position regarding (1) chiliasm, (2) lodgery, (3) pulpit, and (4) altar fellowship with non-Lutherans.[2]

Soon the Four Points began also to trouble Wisconsin as well. Thus in 1868, the Wisconsin Synod determined to leave the General Council unless its doctrinal platform was changed, and, when this was not done, withdrew the following year.[1]

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[1] Wentz, p. 153.

[2] The objections of the Missouri, Iowa, and Ohio Synods are well summarized in Neve's History of the Lutheran Church in America, pp. 158-162.

For several years there had been a desire to enter into a closer relationship with the Missouri Synod; this was true in spite of Missouri's very sharp criticisms of Wisconsin in the past and its continued suspicion of Wisconsin's orthodoxy. In October, 1868, a meeting was held between representatives of the two groups in which meeting they recognized each other as orthodox, and pulpit and altar fellowship was established. The Wisconsin Synod was to be allowed the temporary use of Concordia Seminary at St. Louis for the training of pastors.[2]

The fruit of this agreement was seen in 1872, when the Wisconsin Synod, together with the Missouri Synod, the Norwegian Synod, the Minnesota Synod (after 1872, part of the Wisconsin Synod), the Ohio Synod, and the Illinois Synod (after 1880, part of the Missouri Synod), organized at St. John's Lutheran Church in Milwaukee, the Evangelical Lutheran

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[1] Continuing in His Word, pp. 71-72.

[2] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XIII (May, 1940), pp. 8-12. Even this, however, did not mean that tensions between the two synods were a thing of the past. Ibid., p. 10.

Synodical Conference of North America.[1] This brought Wisconsin then into a close relationship with Missouri and Ohio, two of the three most conservative Lutheran groups in America, while the third, Buffalo, had already been alienated from the alliance by previous controversies which had also rendered it almost devoid of any influence.

Against all indications, Wisconsin was to stand with the Missourians in the coming controversy on predestination and thus, too, further strengthen the fellowship between the two groups.

The Wisconsin Synod had opened a theological seminary in 1864, in Watertown in conjunction with Northwestern College. In 1866, (Gustav) Adolph (Felix Theodore) Hoenecke, soon to become the acknowledged theological leader of the Synod, became a theological professor. In 1870, the Seminar closed and the students from the Wisconsin Synod went to St. Louis to study at Concordia Seminary, but it was opened again in

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[1] The founding of the Synodical Conference and the intention of C. F. W. Walther deserve and need further study. Thus, too, study is needed of Walther's "state-synods" ideal. It seems that Walther quite clearly had in mind the dream of a large organization, although it is also clear that the Synodical Conference never became anything more than a loose organization of synods which mutually recognized each other and engaged in very limited common work. For the state-synods strife, see Ibid., XIV (January and February, 1940), pp. 3-6, 2-9. The defeat of the state-synods idea, followed by the disastrous Election Controversy of the 1880's, spelled the doom to Walther's dream for the establishment of a great confessional Lutheran Church on American soil.

1878, and located in Milwaukee. Hoenecke resumed his professorship.

Adolph Hoenecke came to exert a strong influence on the character of the whole Synod, although his influence was by no means as great as that of Walther or later of Franz Pieper in the Missouri Synod. That this was the case was probably due to Hoenecke's personality, which was apparently retiring, as well as to the fact that there was in the Wisconsin Synod tradition no place for the "strong man."[1] It is also true that Hoenecke's Dogmatik, although published after his death, has never become the standard text even at the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, where Hoenecke's successor, John Schaller, was at the time of his death in the process of preparing his own text on dogmatics, one part of which was published in 1919. John P. Meyer, Schaller's successor and, since 1920, the teacher of dogmatics at the Seminary, has from the beginning relied on no one text but primarily on his own material.

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[1] The term is not necessarily meant in a bad sense, but to indicate the unusual strength exerted by Walther and to a lesser degree by Pieper. It indicates, too, that both Walther and Pieper were not only theological professors but also closely involved in the political and administrative life of their Synod. Both men, for instance, served as presidents of the Missouri Synod. So, too, the habit within Missouri of requesting a Gutachten from the theological faculty on controversial issues was never practiced in Wisconsin until the ill-fated Gutachten on the Beitz Paper in 1927. Nor was there ever the extensive depending upon an authoritative word of advice before action could be taken on a local level. This is brought out, for instance, by the practice, already noted, of devoting time to "Casuistry" at Missouri Synod conferences. When the problem cannot be solved at the conference level the logical step is then to request a Gutachten from St. Louis, in effect, from a professor of dogmatics.

Adolph Hoenecke, the dogmatician of the Wisconsin Synod, was born at Brandenburg, Germany, in 1835. He studied at Halle, where he was influenced by Friedrich A. G. Tholuck.[1] He came to this country under an agreement made with the Berlin Missionary Society, with the understanding that his American service would count later toward an appointment in the Prussian Church. However, after working in America, he realized that he could not, with a good conscience, return to Germany to work in a church where he considered confessional loyalty an impossibility. Thus, he determined to remain here and to serve the Wisconsin Synod.

The chief source for the study of Hoenecke's theological approach is his Evangelische-Lutherische Dogmatik (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1912). A study of this makes it clear that Hoenecke stood in the same tradition as did

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[1] Koehler, J. P. "Dr. A. Hoenecke," Theologische Quartalschrift, V (January, 1908), p. 1-6. A later interpretation of Hoenecke by Koehler which is especially valuable for its analysis of Hoenecke's personality is in "The History of the Wisconsin Synod," XV (October, 1942), pp. 8-11. For a large-scale analysis of Hoenecke, see August Pieper's "Dr. Hoenecke's Bedeutung fuer die Wisconsin Synode und die Amerikanische-Lutherische Kirche," Theologische Quartalschrift, XXXII (July, October, 1935), pp. 101-177, 225-244; XXXIII (January, 1936), pp. 1-19.

Walther and Franz Pieper. That is, all three were informed by the methodology and point of view of the seventeenth century Lutheran dogmaticians. And while there was in all three of them a strong appreciation of Luther, it is doubtful whether they were capable of fully grasping Luther, since they could not help but read him in the light of and in terms of the categories of the dogmaticians.[1] Pieper was most vulnerable on this score, the least careful in his polemics, the least historical, and perhaps the most omniscient. But Hoenecke, too, was hindered in his work by an undue reliance on a methodology in many respects identical with that which Luther had repudiated. None of the three, Walther, Hoenecke, or Pieper, was an exegete.[2] Thus, their Biblical study, where all three were given to the atomistic proof-text methodology, tended to be guided by their dogmatics rather than their dogmatics by their exegesis. This is not to say that all three were identical, nor to say that they were not dealing with living issues, but it is to say that what J. P. Koehler sees as the weakness in the theology of Midwestern American Lutheranism comes out in Hoenecke as well as in Walther, and to a far greater extent in Franz Pieper than in either of the others.

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[1] In this respect Ewald Plass' What Luther Says (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), remains a typical example of this "citation" approach to Luther. The work of Pieper especially, but Walther, too, is full of atomistic "proofs" from Luther.

[2] Hoenecke's weakness as an exegete is illustrated in his Dogmatik throughout. The weakness comes out clearly in his "Ueber den Schriftbewies in der Konkordienformel," Theologische Quartalschrift, I (July, 1904), pp. 113-131.

A partial exception to the above generalization might be taken on the basis of the Prolegomena in Hoenecke's Dogmatik. Here the author reveals himself as an exact worker with a desire to be loyal, not to a particular tradition, but to Scripture itself, and in this desire to try to avoid any premature conclusions before all the detail work has been done. So also Hoenecke's articles in the first few volumes of the Theologische Quartalschrift are some of them quite impressive.[1] The main body of the Dogmatik, however, is highly synthetic and leans on the Scriptures largely for proof texts. And while the tone of the work and the less polemical character of it makes it much more attractive than the work of Franz Pieper, the two men belong to the same school. Hoenecke's sermons, too, are, like Walther's, largely doctrinal discussions.

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[1] See especially "Zum Wesen und Begriff der Theologie," I (January, April, 1904), pp. 3-17, 49-66, and "Inkonsequenzen," II (April, 1905), pp. 65-88. Both are very careful studies and in fact leave one with the impression that they were preliminary studies for the Prolegomena.

Hoenecke was considered to be a remarkable teacher by his students, although this may at least partly be explained by the fact that dogmatics was the central subject in the curriculum and thus stood out in the minds of the students. In this stress, Wisconsin was no different from the Missouri Synod where the spirited teaching was in dogmatics, at least until the appointment in 1887 of Georg Stoeckhardt at Concordia Seminary. And there is nothing to indicate that the situation was any different in the other Lutheran synods.

There was, however, in Hoenecke evidently (though the Dogmatik does not indicate this) a conception of language that was not typical in Lutheran scholastic dogmatics. At least Koehler, who worked closely with Hoenecke and who was both appreciative and critical of him, claims to be true.[1]

> But another thing was said [by Hoenecke] of Tholuck's exegetical principles that the ordinary run of dogmatician would not appreciate. "It was both an asset and a liability in Tholuck's exegesis that he

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[1] Hoenecke, Adolph. Glorified in His Passion, translated by Werner Franzmann. (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1953). Many volumes of Walther's sermons have been printed and translated into both English and Norwegian. Most famous, perhaps, is his Gospel Postil. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1876). It is obvious from the style of the two men that Walther had a better flare for popular preaching and also lent himself more easily to imitation. Both men used their texts as bases for doctrinal discussions.

> derived the sense not from the expression but interpreted the expression according to the sense. . ." Tholuck went too far in this, but dogmaticians of good repute should not simply condemn the principle. Ignorance or denial of the principle leads to such absurdities that the dogmatician will try, by dogmatical procedure, to establish an alibi for the sacred writer. . . Hoenecke's and Stoeckhardt's writings boast fine instances where they employ the above principle in the right way and thereby, in the very process of dogmatical discussion, plumb the depths of Scriptural truth.[1]

There was also in Hoenecke a certain flexibility that has not always characterized the orthodoxist, with the result that he was able to tolerate and even defend positions contrary to his own. This is borne out by two stories reported by Koehler.

Koehler, during his tenure at Northwestern College (1888-1900) had come to the conclusion that the Book of Job, although an authentic part of Scripture and thus inspired and authoritative, was not historical in the sense that a man like Job actually lived. It was concerned rather with the question of a man's relationship with God and the problem of justice. The book is a story in much the sense of, for instance, the New Testament story of Dives and Lazarus. The New Testament references to Job do not establish nor are they even concerned with the historicity of Job but point to the meaning of the poetic composition. Hoenecke received protests because of Koehler's false doctrine. These protests Hoenecke refused to entertain, even though he did not agree with Koehler. The same thing happened when Koehler published his "Die Analogie des Glaubens" in the first volume of the *Theologische Quartalschrift*.[1] In this instance Koehler was defending, among other things, the doctrinal position taken by the Missouri Synod in the *Election Controversy*. However, he set forth unorthodox views on the *analogy of faith* and maintained that the word *pistis* (faith) in the New Testament is used only subjectively, a view contrary to all the Lutheran dogmaticians and undercutting any Scriptural foundation for the *Fides quae creditur* (the faith which is believed) with which these dogmaticians operated. Again, Hoenecke did not agree with Koehler, but merely gave him a book which set forth the traditional position. Beyond that, Hoenecke did not go, not because he was indifferent to doctrine but seemingly because he realized that the views of the fathers do not settle all issues.[1]

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[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XV (October, 1942), p. 11. For a categorical condemnation of this principle and for an extreme statement of a literalistic methodology, see Franz Pieper's Christian Dogmatics, Vol. I, p. 72. "It is hard to understand how men can make themselves believe that in ascertaining the Christian doctrine one must look not so much to the words (usually they say 'the letter') of Scripture as rather to the 'content,' the import. Here we have one of the many catch phrases which despite their inanity endure from generation to generation."

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[1] I (January, April, July, 1904), pp. 18-36, 75-90, 131-169.

Nor was Hoenecke a heresy hunter. And even in the heated storms of the Election Controversy, Hoenecke stopped short of the exaggerated charges of many of the Missourians against their opponents. He merely charged the opponents with "inconsistencies."[2]

Koehler, who studied under Walther and worked with Hoenecke, claims that Hoenecke found it easier to make criticisms of the fathers than did Walther. He feels that Hoenecke used the only sources he knew, which were the dogmaticians, but that he was not tied down to the dogmatism that in certain Lutheran circles passed for pure Lutheranism.[3] Hoenecke was obviously appreciative of the Missourians, but was critical of their tendency to settle issues with quotations from the fathers and their tendency, too, to be unduly dogmatic about their own conception of things.

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[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XV (October, 1942), p. 9.

[2] Ibid., XVI (September, 1942), p. 7.

[3] Ibid., XV (October, 1942), pp. 8-11.

> When the writer [Koehler] vicared for the convalescent Hoenecke several months in 1878 . . . Hoenecke made the remark: "They [the Missourians] have something sectarian about them. . ." This Hoenecke said because of an outward manner that betrays a false mentality, the inward and outward attitude of having things cut and dried, which gives one the sense of self-sufficiency and superiority, and the group so imbued an exclusive character among its fellows. With the rank and file it leads to a patronizing manner.[1]

At any rate, Hoenecke had a lasting influence on the Wisconsin Synod, and was especially influential in helping the Synod to reorient itself among the Lutherans here in America, and during the Election Controversy he influenced Wisconsin to follow Missouri. And because Hoenecke's Dogmatik was recognized as thoroughly orthodox (and what he taught so recognized long before it was published), it meant that the other orthodox synods, especially Missouri, recognized Wisconsin as officially orthodox even if its practice remained less clear.[2] But also because Hoenecke, although thoroughly orthodox, was more flexible and because he exerted a considerably less thoroughgoing influence on his environment than did, for instance, Walther or Pieper, there remained a more open atmosphere within the Wisconsin Synod.

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[1] Ibid., XVI (November, 1943), p. 10. It is impossible, of course, to know how much of this was really Hoenecke and how much was Koehler's latter-day interpretation of what he thinks Hoenecke must have meant. To the writer it sounds more like Koehler than Hoenecke.

[2] Thus Franz Pieper could write in 1924, in the Vorwort to the first volume of his Christliche Dogmatik (p. iv), in a context in which he is defending his Repristinations Theo-

In the Vorwort to Hoenecke's Dogmatik (pp. ix-x), Professor John Schaller, his successor at the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, summarized Hoenecke's influence:

> The issue at this time when Hoenecke began his work was to provide the Wisconsin Synod with a clear doctrinal position and to clarify its relation to other American church bodies as well as to the Church of Germany. At that time the Wisconsin Synod was a member of the General Council, which indeed in its profession of the Lutheran doctrine was far more positive than the General Synod, but because of its unionistic practices offended the Lutherans belonging to the Wisconsin Synod. On the other side stood the Missouri Synod with its unequivocal acknowledgment of the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church and its outspoken testimony against those who did not seriously practice the Lutheran Confession. In the discussions regarding the Confessions, young pastor Hoenecke participated actively and soon exerted a decisive influence.[1]

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logie, concerning Hoenecke's work, "Um historisch korrekt zu bleiben, durfte ich die weitere Tatsache nicht verschwiegen, dass die in der Missourisynode beklagte Theologie mit klarem Bewusstsein auch in andern kirchlichen Gemeinschaften gepflagt wird. Ich weise auf D. Hoenecke's sehr ausfuehrliche 'Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik' hin, aus der hervorgeht, dass die Lehrstellung der Synode von Wisconsin u.a. St. sich voellig mit der Lehrstellung der Missourisynode deckt."

[1] Translation by Theodore Engelder.

By 1900, the course of the Wisconsin Synod had been quite definitely charted. That is, it had thoroughly cut itself off from all contacts with the Eastern Lutherans, was an integral part of Midwestern American Lutheranism, and since the 1880's, had even in this latter context been isolated to the extent that its fraternal relationships were almost exclusively limited to the Missouri Synod. It was not, however, a solid unity. It remained a rather loose and comparatively heterogenous group with strong individualism. Certainly no one man had emerged to combine in himself practical, political, and theological leadership.[1] The Synod, too, lacked the strong centralization of the other groups.[2] This was in some respects a disadvantage, but it was in certain important respects an advantage, since obviously in such a situation an original and nonconformist mind could find a more favorable climate in which to work. Neither had Wisconsin Synod orthodoxy attained anything like the orthodoxy of Missouri, where almost every problem, also on the level of pastoral practice, was covered by prescribed and carefully worked out principles.[1] Strong centralization, or what should more properly perhaps be described as strong officialdom, was to develop in the years following 1900, while an effective esprit de corps has quite obviously never developed. In fact, what stands out even if one looks at little more than the superficial surface life of the Synod, is precisely Wisconsin's failure over

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[1] Here Wisconsin differed not only quite obviously from Missouri, but also from the other synods of the time and context. That is, no one spoke for the Wisconsin Synod in anything like the sense that U. V. Koren did for the Norwegian Synod (as see, G. Belgum's The Old Norwegian Synod in America), or as the Fritschel family did for the Iowa Synod (see, Neve's History of the Lutheran Church in America, pp. 274-287).

[2] This was true in a real sense even of the Missouri Synod, which, although it zealously guarded the rights of the local congregation, had a strongly democratic form of church government, and was thoroughly congregational in polity (only the Lutheran Free Church exceeded Missouri's congregationalism, as see, Nelson's Union Movement, pp. 397-399), it nevertheless was also strongly centralized, not only in doctrine and practice, but also in the sense that it achieved a remarkable esprit de corps. Ohio and the Norwegians were similar to Missouri in polity. Iowa was less congregational, while the ultimate for the Lutherans here was seen in the Buffalo Synod, which was so hierarchical that it at one time excommunicated the whole Missouri Synod. See The Lutheran Cyclopedia, p. 148. Interestingly, however, a comparison between

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Missouri and Buffalo radically illustrates how little theory may have to do with the actual life of a group. What strikes one about Buffalo is precisely its inability to achieve a sense of unity. For Missouri's doctrine of the local congregation and of the "Representative Church" (synod), see Vol. III of Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics*, pp. 415-421, 427-435. Incidentally, a good example, too, of proof-texts from Luther for congregational polity.

[1] See, for an illustration of this, John Fritz' *Pastoral Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1932), based on Walther's *Amerikanische-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie*. In contrast, it was known, for instance, that at the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, J. P. Koehler and August Pieper differed on a number of issues, such as *Schwagerehe*. So, too, women's suffrage in the church was at least a debatable question. Such differences seem trivial and hardly an illustration of openness. However, in Missouri such differences between theological professors in the same school were unheard of.

the years to make a real success of anything it has undertaken, while the two most obvious and determined attempts in this century to produce a united front have been dismal failures.

From this point of view alone the history of the Synod deserves study. Why has Wisconsin always somehow missed the mark? What accounts for its glaring lack of synodical unity even at those times (such as during the Protestant Controversy of the 1920's, or the recent break with the Missouri Synod) when it most self-consciously sought to achieve unity? What accounts for Wisconsin's inability to overcome its inner tensions?

That the Synod has, in fact, been plagued by cliques, inner tensions, schisms, withdrawals, and a general lack of success is obvious, and even recognized from time to time in official synodical material as, for instance, in Elmer Kiessling's synodical essay of 1957. In it a good deal of attention is directed toward the forces that have tended toward disunity.

> It can be proved historically that the early centrifugal tendencies passed away long ago and have no direct connection with those in operation today. But this much must be said: that early history has had its effect in a kind of negative way--not for something it created, but for something it left uncreated. It was not our destiny at the outset to come under the influence of powerful forces making

> for cohesiveness. How different in this respect were the experiences of those early Saxons who became founders of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. . . . Such experiences were missed in our early history.[1]

And then as he comes to an analysis of the Synod life in this century, he adds:

> Let us beware of what has been called ragged individualism, the kind that is ready to go it alone on the slightest pretext. That type had a heyday in the 1920's. There are indications that it might have another heyday in the 1950's. [What Kiessling fears here came to pass with the formation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession.] And what has ragged individualism ever accomplished? Nothing that could not have been better achieved within the fellowship. Much beside that is hateful, harmful, regretable. The role of the militant dissenter, the malcontent, the schismatic is not a happy one. His family usually suffers with him.[2]

At any rate, Wisconsin has somehow always gone wrong. In its early days it operated with an approach which needed drastic overhauling before it could effectively make for Lutheran self-identity. Then when it did ally itself with the mainstream of Midwestern American Lutheranism it somehow always lagged behind and failed to achieve the self-identity of the other synods. When it managed to produce in the Wauwatosa Theology a peculiar and relevant theological approach, it must be granted that even that, however admirable it was in its conception and intention, became a bone of contention. In the end Wisconsin repudiated it and retreated instead to a rigid orthodoxy at precisely the time that the other groups were modifying the old pattern.

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[1] "The Tie that Binds," Faith-Life, XXXII (April, 1959), p. 10.

[2] *Ibid.*, XXXII (May, 1959), pp. 9-10.

There are numerous particular issues in the history, especially the history from 1900 to 1925, which if examined might throw light on the larger problem and help to explain the mystery of the Wisconsin Synod. Thus, for instance, the so-called Cincinnati Case (1904-1909), the Laienbewegung (1913-1916), the Church-Ministry conflict (roughly 1910-1920), the Praeses ohne Amt argument, and a number of other issues need study. As it is, there is no adequate analysis of the inner life of the Synod for the period since about 1900. Continuing in His Word is almost worthless for this purpose. To be sure, J. P. Koehler touches on all the issues and up to the turn of the century his study is based on careful examination of the source material and is thoroughly documented. The balance of his study was written after his ouster in 1930, and Koehler thus (since he never again returned to the Seminary grounds where the archives are housed) wrote largely personal reminiscences. His generalizations lack documentation. Added to this, he studiously avoided discussing the controversial issues in which his person was involved.[1] Thus, there are valuable insights and numerous suggestive asides, but little on which to do historical research without the source material alongside it.

The official Synod reports, though available, are of little help. What is needed is an examination of such things as the minutes of the various pastoral conferences and boards, the letters and papers of officials and especially of the Synod's presidents, G. Gausewitz (1901-1907, 1913-1917), G. E. Bergemann (1917-1933), and John Brenner (1933-1955). Evidently, most of this material is in the Synod archives at Mequon, Wisconsin, although not organized. What is more serious, the material is virtually inaccessible to an outsider.[2]

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[1] Typical is his reference to the Protestant Controversy. "That story is not for me to tell in this history, since I am party to it, and it does not matter much to Synod." "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XVI (December, 1943), p. 8.

[2] The writer's request to use the archives, on July 16, 1963, met with evasion. Finally he was informed by Professor A. Schuetze, member of the Archives Committee, that special permission would be needed for a non-member to use the material. In effect, the conditions would have made free research impossible. Professor J. P. Meyer, who could furnish considerable material on the faculty at Wauwatosa during the 1920's, and on the Koehler ouster, since he was instrumental in effecting it, refused any access to his material and said, "Koehler was all mixed up and in the wrong, but let us say that it was such an ugly case that we best leave it where it is, in the past and dead."

There can obviously then be no attempt here to give any dependable analysis of the Synod's history from 1900 to 1925. As much, however, as is stated above is safe to assert and to assert, too, that there were conflicts that helped to pave the way for the bitter *Protestant Controversy* and the repudiation of Koehler. The *Protestant Controversy* is very well documented, although here, too, the archives would turn up valuable material which is at present inaccessible. However, *Faith-Life* constitutes an amazingly full documentary source. It not only contains a wealth of polemical material as well as all the documents on the side of the ousted men, but has also reprinted most of the public documents from the Synod's side. In addition hundreds of letters have been published. *Faith-Life* has, in fact, attempted to publish everything not published in other form which is relevant to the conflict regardless of what side the material represents. In addition, there is available *Berichte der Documente und Korrespondenzen des West Wisconsin Districts. . . Gehalten zu Watertown, Wisconsin vom 15 bis 18 November, 1927, und vom 15 bis 16 Februar, 1928* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1928).

One meaningful way to see the whole *Protestant Controversy* and the Koehler ouster is as a concerted effort to achieve precisely the uniformity that had been lacking in the Wisconsin Synod and to thus get rid of a confusing element within it.

The primary interest of this study is in pointing out the distinctive point of view and methodology of what has been called the Wauwatosa Theology. This theological perspective failed to make any deep or lasting impression upon the Wisconsin Synod, and even during the time that it was dominant at the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary was apparently neither understood nor appreciated by the rank and file of the Synod's theological students and pastors. Since it did not effectively contribute, either, to any solution of the theological problems of Midwestern American Lutheranism (which problems have really never been solved as much as evaded), the study of the Wauwatosa Theology is not so much a study of the history of the Wisconsin Synod or even of its theological tradition as it is the study of an experiment in theological education.

Nor is the study of the Wauwatosa Theology finally even the study of a trio of men, August Pieper, John Schaller, and John Philip Koehler, but primarily of Koehler.[1] But while this is true, it is also true that Koehler was able to do his work and develop his conceptions partly because he was, at least during the earlier part of his professorship at Wauwatosa, in the company of men who were open to fresh approaches and interested, at least theoretically, in original theological work based on fresh investigations unhampered by overdependence on the fathers.[1] This is true even of John Schaller, who never did escape the scholastic tradition, but who obviously meant to , since he articulated a theoretical approach to dogmatics which recognized the weakness of the conventional methodology.[1]

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[1] Although this may not be quite fair to August Pieper, in spite of the fact that he ended by thoroughly repudiating what Koehler stood for. See, for instance, Pieper's "Das Schriftstudium als die besondere Aufgabe des Pastors," Theologische Quartalschrift, III (October, 1909), pp. 193-206. In many other articles, too, he expresses views thoroughly in accord with Koehler, although the latter was never given to Pieper's sweeping judgments and frequent distortions of other views.

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[1] Indeed, the above might appear as a truism. That is, at least in theory one would assume that all Lutherans wanted to do original work and get back to the sources. However, the whole Missouri-Iowa conflict over the proper use of the Confessions involved precisely this problem. The Iowans were themselves strict confessionalists but even then did not go far enough for Missouri. See, the second edition of Neve's Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America, pp. 285-286. "Iowa saw Missouri as a 'dogmatizing tendency,' and declared that it represented 'the exegetical tendency' held by Loehe and other European scholars of the confessional side. It was the intention to lay greater stress upon immediate proof from the Scripture. . . The character of the controverted questions was the reason why Iowa always appealed to the Bible, because the confessions contained no decision in regard to these questions. Missouri, on the other hand, tried to ascribe its views (which had been gleaned eclectically from the great teachers of former ages), to the confessions. To this Iowa objected,claiming that the confessions must be understood in their historical sense. 'If you finally demand from us that we should interpret our noble confessions according to the Scriptures, we cannot as good Lutherans comply with such a demand, in fact, we are surprised [over against Iowa] that you as Lutherans we already possess in our confessions the pure sense and unadulterated interpretation of the divine word. And we would have to refer to Scriptures only in the case of argument with non-Lutherans. . .' " Ibid., p. 285. Here Neve has translated and quoted from Missouri's Lutheraner, X, p. 193.

It is true that when the term *Wauwatosa Theology* is used, reference is invariably meant to the work of the trio of men rather than to only one.[2] The Protestants, the men who were suspended from the Synod at the same time and in the same conflict that led to Koehler's ousting, use the term with great regularity in *Faith-Life*. The claim of *Faith-Life*, in fact, is precisely that it represents the continuation and the application of the point of view of the *Wauwatosa* Theology and of Koehler.[1]

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[1] His intent is apparent as well as his realization of the dangers of a "citation" methodology, in his "Ueber Autoritaeten-Polemik," *Theologische Quartalschrift*, VI (October, 1909), pp. 206-220. Here Schaller criticizes the Ohio Synod precisely for simply taking over the fathers.

[2] While not using the expression *Wauwatosa Theology*, there is an interesting "quotation" in Neve's second edition, pp. 286-289. It is quoted in full here both because it is one of the few outside references to what the Wauwatosa men were trying to do and also because it fits the context above. The quotation itself is not authentic. That is, Neve gives no reference but says it is translated from a "series of articles in 'Quartalschrift' signed by Professors Koehler, Augustus [sic] Pieper and Director Schaller." No such series exist nor is the quotation taken from anything written by any one of the men and appearing in *Quartalschrift*. At the same time, it is thoroughly authentic in spirit and does summarize what was said over and over again. Some of the expressions are identical with those used by Koehler, and Neve must have gotten the quotation from someone who was trying to summarize the intent of the Wauwatosa men. "When Dr. Walther took charge of church affairs in America, it was of supreme importance that true Lutheranism should be defined over against 'American Lutheranism' and confessional unionism. . . This could be done in no other way than by proving with absolute clearness from the writings of the Lutheran dogmaticians, (1) what the true Lutheran doctrine is; (2) it is contained in our confessions. To this task Walther devoted his whole genius, strength, and labor. This explains why the old magazines on every question are filled with proofs from the sources, and why the synodical reports are almost entirely made up of

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compilations of quotations from the fathers. Walther pursued this method. . .but his pupils also adheredto it. It was considered the proper treatment of a question, even after the fight against false Lutheranism had long been decided, to refer to the declarations of ancient scholars. . . . The Scripture proof was taken not directly from the source, but from the writings of the fathers. Thus (without being aware of it) they got into a rut; a kind of intellectual crystallization developed, for such is always the consequence of traditionalistic dogmatics. . . . But one could not tolerate it that a matter was presented in a way which differed in any respect from the customary method. Those pursuing original methods were suspected of heretical tendencies. A number of phrases, arguments, and methods were becoming stereotyped. A certain legalistic type of orthodoxy was developed, which very easily became unjust over against opponents. And there was an absence of that spirit of love and patience which considers only the matter, even if the form is not perfect. In this peculiar spirit several generations grew up. But in the controversy concerning predestination Hoenecke and Stoeckhardt blazed a new trail. An 'exegetical tendency' asserted itself, which while directly to the Scriptures. And this immediate investigation of the Scriptures creates another, a milder, more charitable, more tolerant spirit." The whole quotation fits precisely Koehler's analysis, and especially was he convinced that in the *Election Controversy* the resources were made available to overcome the old methodology. However authentic, it is a good description of Wauwatosa's intentions.

[1] "We may say for ourselves, however, that we have tried to analyze the peculiar point of view of the Wauwatosa Theology, and have come at any rate to realize its vital importance, and thus being mastered by it can't help ourselves but carry on with it. To carry on with it, in the first place, to us means to continue to try to master it." Karl Koehler, "Our Master Mission," *Faith-Life*, IV (March, 1931), p. 11.

So much have the Protestants spoken of this and of J. P. Koehler, that Wisconsin Synod men accuse them of canonizing

Thus, Faith-Life typically defines the Wauwatosa Theology as referring to the work of Koehler, Pieper, and Schaller.

> What we have learned to call the Wauwatosa Gospel is all of that for which the faculty of the Wauwatosa seminary stood over a period of a quarter of a century. This was the period of intensive work on the part of the professors and resulted in leading the students into a thorough study, of all branches of theology.[1]

Faith-Life has also, however, not hesitated to say that "Professor Koehler is the father of the Wauwatosa Theology; it

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Koehler. Typical of this sentiment, although more strongly expressed than usual, is a criticism directed to Faith-Life in a letter of March 10, 1960, from the Rev. Reinhart Pope of Racine, Wisconsin. "The impression is furthermore fostered that here [in Koehler] is none other than 'des Herrn Gottes Kanzlei,' and that all angels watch with bated breath to see whether or not the world will finally make up to this fact. Yet, in spite of your claim to know and teach the Gospel, you have only really subsided into being sententiarists of J. P. Koehler. . . . You are living and glorifying in your own little Golden Age of the past." Printed in Faith-Life, XXXIII (April, 1960), p. 16. Elmer Kiessling in a letter to the writer of September 15, 1963, makes the same point more moderately. "And speaking of those who knew Koehler well, there are the Protestants, at least the older among them. They have been busy canonizing--not to say apotheosizing him there 35 years."

[1] Herbert Parisius' "Report" of the Protestant Conference, Liberty, Wisconsin, November 1-2, 1932, Faith-Life, V (November, 1932), pp. 12-13. The minutes of the same conference point out that the topic of discussion was Wauwatosa's attempt to reorient theology and church life.

stood and fell with him."[1] And as is natural in view of the fact that _Faith-Life_ is published by men who were violently ousted from the Synod and who claim that their ousting involved the total repudiation by the Synod of the very theology for which Koehler stood, it tends to see Koehler and the _Wauwatosa Theology_ in terms that to the outsider must appear as both extravagant and uncritical, while to Wisconsin Synod people _Faith-Life_ appears to be perpetuating precisely the weakest features of the _Wauwatosa Theology_ (if, indeed, any continuity is granted between _Faith-Life_ and what has at any time been accepted within the Synod.)

Elmer Kiessling does recognize that there was such a thing as a distinctive theological approach at Wauwatosa, recognizes too that the move to the new campus at Thiensville (Mequon) in 1929, marked a break with Wauwatosa, and also credits the _Wauwatosa Theology_ with having had a positive contribution to make. At the same time his feelings toward it are ambivalent.

> I mentioned that our Seminary with its faculty of outstanding personalities [the trio referred to above] developed what has been called the Wauwatosa Theology or popularly the Wauwatosa gospel. Its essential feature

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[1] Gerhard Ruediger. "Anent the Centennial," _Faith-Life_, XXIV (Cember, 1951), p. 12.

was a fresh approach to the study of the Bible. There have been old style Lutherans who looked on the Bible as a collection of proof texts for doctrines or of rules for Christian conduct. Our professors looked upon it as the inspired record of God's merciful dealings with men and history. In practice this meant that much stress was placed on reading whole books of the Bible. . ., and of gaining a broad perspective of sacred history as revealed in the whole Bible, not only in bits of it contained in proof texts. It also meant the intensive study of church history. . . Since, therefore, the emphasis was on exegesis. . ., and on history, the term "exegetical-history" was often given to this approach.

. . . .

You remember how we described the Wauwatosa Theology in the ideal. Let us now compare it with the reality. Beautiful as it is, *it hasn't always strengthened the tie that binds.* [italics mine] It has rather been a bone of contention. . . Some didn't appreciate it enough; others appreciated it too much. The first group said in effect: It is an ideal, but ideals don't work in the practical field. *There we need something the people can understand--and it is true, people don't always understand the niceties of the Wauwatosa Theology. Also, the first group said, children learning their religion need proof texts, definite short statements they can lay their hands on.* [italics mine] This first group was also irritated by what they considered the insistent, overbearing manner in which the record group presented their views. The practitioners and proteges of the Wauwatosa Gospel did often assume a lofty attitude and made extreme claims. . . They intimated, and still intimate [the reference is obviously to *Faith-Life*] that their theology is the only vital theology to be found in the Wisconsin Synod.[1]

But even the official history of the Synod, while stressing the continuity theme and avoiding any real discussion of the conflict in the 1920's, made some reference, although evasive and superficial, to what has been called the Wauwatosa Theology. While it pointed to the theological development as a carrying forth of the implications of what Hoenecke stood for, it did nevertheless recognize the work done by the trio at Wauwatosa.

> From the amalgamation of the four districts in 1917, to form the Joint Synod, to the end of the first century of its existence there is a period of thirty-three years. Dominant in this period, both spiritually and formally, were three men. . . None of them had been a pupil of Dr. A. Hoenecke, yet all of them became, as it were, his heirs, taking

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[1] From "The Tie that Binds," as reprinted in Faith-Life, XXXII (May, 1959), pp. 8-9. For an attack on the essay, see Albert Meier's "Bound Up, Neither Mollified with Ointment," Ibid., pp. 11-15. Actually, the Kiessling essay is by all odds the most candid discussion of the Wauwatosa Theology by a Wisconsin Synod member the writer has seen. The whole phenomenon is generally avoided. Thus, Professor J. P. Meyer, in an interview with the writer on July 16, 1963, denied that the Seminary has changed or that what has been called the Wauwatosa Theology ever existed. Rather, the main difference between Wauwatosa and the Seminary since, is that things are now stated "more clearly." He said that J. P. Koehler, although stimulating, was not always sound, stated things in a confusing way, and tended to avoid taking "definite positions," and must thus be read "with caution." In general, however, the Wauwatosa Theology is a myth of Faith-Life and the disciples of J. P. Koehler.

> over where he had left off, carrying it onward and forward. One outstanding characteristic,which all three had in common, which bound them together to form a unit, a team as it were, in their common work, was that they were thoroughly and genuinely evangelical. . . . With great vehemence they opposed all dead and life-destroying formalism and petrifying orthodoxism (Verknoeckerung), all manifestations of bureaucracy and church politics. . . But they were also rugged individualists, especially the first two [Pieper and Koehler], and the third member of this group [Schaller] with his kindly yet firm disposition could and did serve admirably as moderator and conciliator, ironing out differences and restoring again harmonious cooperation and unity of action and purpose.[1]

Again the Wauwatosa period is discussed and somewhat more adequately.

> At this time [the turn of the century] two men entered the faculty who were destined to wield great influence in the

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[1] Continuing in His Word, pp. 39-40. The reference to Schaller as conciliator has some truth and may well be his chief claim to having contributed to the Wauwatosa Theology. It is quite obvious that only after his death in 1920, did the personality differences between Pieper and Koehler become such as to render joint work difficult. J. P. Koehler himself strongly implies that Schaller, of whom he thought highly, was nevertheless called to the Seminary in 1908, as a compromise candidate, as a conciliator, and in order to satisfy critics of Koehler and Pieper. "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XV (November, 1942), p. 15. The whole installment of that month discusses internal conflicts and gives insights into the Synod's inner life. The installment is entitled, "Work and Strife," Ibid., pp. 12-16.

development of the character of the school. . . . These are the years in which the distinctive characteristics of our Seminary began to emerge. For even as human beings have their individual marks of appearance and action, by which they may be distinguished from each other though they be brothers and sisters of the same family, just so institutions of learning have their own peculiar qualities. . . . In the case of our Seminary, Hoenecke had supplied the clear and sound doctrinal position. His theology was pre-eminently Scriptural in its quality. The references to the works of earlier theologians were definitely of secondary importance. But his field was nevertheless that of systematic theology. And there the danger is always present of bowing to precedent, of emphasizing tradition, of stressing the system--if not in the work of a pioneer teacher, then in the attitude of his followers. Here the emphasis on a sound historical and grammatical interpretation of Scripture, on a thorough introduction of the student into the full and coherent content of Scripture, and on an unrelenting effort to determine what the words of Scripture mean to say, rather than what men would like to have them say--the things which were the distinctive contribution of Koehler and Pieper--served to create the pattern of a balanced theology which our seminary is trying to follow to this day.

It was not all done in the days of Hoenecke. His work was ended by his death on January 3, 1908. But when Professor John Schaller . . . was called to be his successor, it soon became clear that his conception of the teaching of systematic theology. . . was in complete harmony with the pattern that was developing. Thus the next twelve years, during which these three men. . . worked side by side, served to complete the picture. The publication of a theological magazine, the Quartalschrift. . .helped to

> spread the influence of this Wauwatosa theology.[1]

Aside then from Koehler, the men who were directly involved in the Wauwatosa Theology were August Pieper, John Schaller, and during the first few years of Koehler's tenure, Adolph Hoenecke, although Hoenecke quite clearly belongs to an earlier period and contributed mainly by having established a theological frame of reference and for not frustrating the work of his younger colleagues.[2] The three men were of approximately the same age, had been educated at Northwestern College and at Concordia Seminary (under Walther), and Koehler and Pieper had been closely associated with each other since college and seminary days.[3]

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[1] Continuing in His Word, pp. 146-148. The book was edited by a committee, but it is obvious that different men wrote the two sections quoted above. The second must be by a man who has studied and been impressed by the Wauwatosa Theology, as especially the critical references to traditional dogmatics makes clear.

[2] One might, in addition to Schaller, Pieper, and Koehler, include Hermann Gieschen, throughout the period pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Wauwatosa. This was the seminary church, and Gieschen was thought of by Koehler as illustrating homiletically and pastorally the ideals of the Seminary. For an analysis of Gieschen in this light, see Ruediger's "Anent the Centennial," XXIV (December, 1951), pp. 12-13. "His theology was not an appendix, not a supplement, but as stated, a compliment of the Wauwatosa Gospel." Ibid., p. 12. For an example of Gieschen's theology which bears out Ruediger's observation, see his "Das Verhaeltnis der Allgemeinen zur Persoenlichen Rechtfertigung," Theologische Quartalschrift, VII (October, 1910), pp. 233-242.

[3] Interestingly, both men were criticized as being unduly "pro-Missourian." This was an odd charge, since the

The context in which the three men began their work is important and at least certain things can be safely stated. That is, by 1900, the great period of Lutheran immigration was over. The Lutheran Church, while still culturally and linguistically isolated from American life, and destined to remain such at least until the First World War, was nevertheless faced with the formidable task of developing its church life to meet the demands of the time and place. With the exception of some older Lutheran elements in the East, the new Lutheran groups had far more in common than they frequently recognized. They were all permeated with a deep conservatism and most were highly confessional in their point of view.[1] Even the General Synod was increasingly confes-

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Missourians certainly never so regarded them. The charge, however, grew out of the defense by the two of sound pastoral and intersynodical relations between Missouri and Wisconsin. Especially both protested the spirit of competition that tended to motivate each synod against the other. "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XV (September, 1942), p. 8. For one glaring illustration of what both protested, see Koehler's discussion of the "Cincinnati Case," Ibid., XVI (May, 1943), pp. 609. The case is especially interesting since Pieper and Koehler defended Missouri on the issue but with a challenge to Missouri's doctrine of church and ministry. The opponents of Missouri, on the other hand, shared Missouri's doctrine and soon began pressing heresy charges against Koehler and Pieper. Out of this grew the conflict over church-ministry, and the articulation of the Wauwatosa position on the issue.

[1] All this is obvious, but will be analyzed more in detail in Chapter IV, with the legacy of Franz Pieper personifying the whole. Of course, it is also true that if this "conservatism" was part of an adjustment to what the American situation required, then "conservative" is not quite the proper designation for it.

sional, while the General Council was firmly confessional.[1]

The fact also remains, whatever the reason behind the triumph of confessional orthodoxy may be, that the growing conservatism of the Lutheran Church was in many respects a strength, especially as regarded self-identity, but it also carried with it a danger. In the effort to establish a confessional Lutheranism on American soil the methodology and perspective of the seventeenth century became the great tradition. This was natural, since the leaders depended upon the only tools they had in their background which seemed to fit the need. Thus the approach to theology was governed by a point of view that tended to find in dogmatics its starting point, and this the clear, articulate and easily stated dogmatics of a scholastic type. Schmid's Doctrinal Theology was widely used in both the General Synod and Council, as well as in the other synods.[2] The Missouri

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[1] See Wentz, chapter XVII.

[2] Schmid, Heinrich Friedrich F. The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church Exhibited and Verified from the Original Sources. Translated from the fifth edition by Charles A. Hay and Henry E. Jacobs (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publishing Society, 1876). This is often referred to as "Schmid-Jacobs," and went through three editions, and several reprints, most recently in 1961, by Augsburg Publishing House. It is a classic work on Lutheran theology as formulated by fourteen prominent Lutheran theologians of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Synod learned its theology from Baier's Compendium, annotated by Walther.[1] Wisconsin learned its theology from Hoenecke's Dogmatik, and everywhere among the orthodox Lutherans exegesis and history were neglected in the return to orthodoxy.

> After decadent Pietism together with the equally decadent Orthodoxism had ended up in Rationalism, the reawakening of faith in the nineteenth century quite naturally was accompanied by a return to the Bible-believing body of the seventeenth century dogmatics, as a short cut [Italics mine] that exegesis with its new linguistic and historical apparatus could not offer.[2]

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[1] Walther used as a text J. G. Baier's Compendium Theologiae Positivae. (Jena: 1704), and dictated his annotations to the students. For Walther's annotated edition of Baier (which relieved the students of taking dictation), see the Compendium Theologiae Positivae, denuo edendum curavit C. F. W. Walther. (In Urbe Sancti Ludorici: 1879). Walther's selection of Baier is surprising in view of the fact that Baier, probably because of his method which relied on syllogistic arguments, and the causa scheme fell into a certain semi-synergism not condoned by Walther, but which must have played into the background of the Election Controversy and the tendency toward the adoption of the Intuitu Fidei form of predestination.

[2] Koehler, in "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XIV (May, 1941), p. 10. For a longer and well-stated analysis, see his "Die Bedeutung der Historischen Disziplinen fuer die Amerikanische Lutherische Kirche der Gegenwart," Theologische Quartalschrift, I (October, 1904), pp. 205-218. The article aroused objections, especially since it seemed to be a criticism of Walther. Thus Koehler had to write again on the subject. "Noch Einmal die Bedeutung der Historischen Disziplinen, etc.", Ibid., II (January, 1905), pp. 37-42. The two articles together furnish an excellent statement of Koehler's criticism of the tradition and also serve as an introduction to what he wanted the Quartalschrift to stand for.

The bad fruits of this were seen in almost all areas of the life of the Midwestern synods, as the voluminous polemical literature of the period makes clear. Most glaringly the weakness came out in the *Election Controversy*, where the dogmatical approach in vogue applied to profound Biblical concepts acted as a ball and chain.

At any rate, American Lutheranism needed to get beyond the grammar and syntax level of doing theology. The *Wauwatosa Theology* was going to make an effort to do precisely this. The Wauwatosa men were going to be forced to study the Scriptures directly, coherently, and historically.[1] This was going to elevate exegesis and history in an effort to get back to primary sources.

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[1] Again, at least in intention, this emphasis upon a coherent and historical study might appear obvious. Not so, however, in the context of a *loci* theology. Thus Franz Pieper defends what Wauwatosa was to challenge. Approvingly he quotes from Hoenecke, "He says of Walther (I, 320 ff.): 'Carl F. W. Walther was a Scripture theologian. What the Ritschlian Kattenbusch. . .presents as a weakness of Walther, namely, that he issued the slogan for dogmatics: Only *loci!* since it is the characteristic of revelation that we know only *disconnected pieces* Italics mine of God's mysteries, that redounds to the credit of Walther.'" *Christian Dogmatics*, I, p. 173.

Chapter III

THE THREE WAUWATOSA MEN: SCHALLER, PIEPER, AND KOEHLER

The period from 1900 to 1925 represents the flowering of Wisconsin Synod theology.[1] In the writer's considered opinion, the period at Wauwatosa represents a theological activity that in its methodology, interests, and intentions, was quite unlike anything else produced by Midwestern American Lutheranism. And if one thinks primarily of Midwestern Lutheranism as composed of the German Lutheran synods of Old Lutheran orientation that found their constituency among the ranks of the nineteenth century immigrants and leaves out of consideration then the Scandinavian groups (as Koehler somewhat arbitrarily and provincially did), then the contrast between Wauwatosa and what was going on at the seminaries of the synods of Buffalo, Ohio, Missouri, and even Iowa is quite impressive.[1]

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[1] The date, 1925, is chosen as an end to the period since the Protestant Controversy really began in 1924, with the so-called Watertown Case. By 1925, J. P. Koehler was directly involved, and by then, too, the cleavage between Pieper and Koehler was obvious. Koehler's last original contribution to the Quartalschrift was his "Gegenstand, Methode, and Bedeutung des Theologischen Geschichtstudium," XXV (January, 1928), pp. 1-25. It was an expansion of an address given at the beginning of the 1927-28 academic year, and falls considerably short of the quality of most of Koehler's writings. The April issue of the Quartalschrift contained J. P. Meyer's "Brief Review," (pp. 134-160). This was a bitter attack on the Beitz Paper and constituted also a virtual repudiation of everything Koehler had stood for in hermeneutics. By then the Wauwatosa theology was dead.

Since what we have referred to as the Wauwatosa Theology is generally identified with the three men, August Pieper, John Schaller, and John Philip Koehler, who together formed a triumvirate in the history of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, we will attempt here some examination of each of them in order to discover the particular point of view and contribution of each of them.

August Pieper was born at Cartwitz, Pomerania, on September 27, 1857. He was educated at Northwestern College, from which he graduated in 1876, and at Concordia Theological Seminary, graduating in 1879. He served pastorates within the Wisconsin Synod and in 1902, was called from his Milwaukee pastorate to teach Old Testament at the Wauwatosa Semi-

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[1] "Even Iowa," since Iowa's Old Lutheranism was somewhat more ambiguous. In Johann Michael Reu (1869-1943), Iowa's Wartburg Seminary had a theologian of stature, scholarship, and originality. In many respects he had much in common with Koehler. And the very fact that he had been influenced by the Erlangen Theology and its Heilsgeschichte motif, set him off from his contemporaries here. At the same time Reu, too, illustrates the tendency to become increasingly conservative in the American Lutheran environment. In his old age he became quite "Missourian."

For Reu as an Erlangen exponent, see Nelson and Fevold, vol. II, p. 283. For an example of his "metamorphosis" see his "What is Scripture and How Can We Become Certain of Its Divine Origin?" in his In the Interest of Lutheran Unity. (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1940). Even here, however, although Reu is obviously trying to satisfy Missouri, his debt to the Erlangen Theology and its emphasis upon revelation as the historical deeds of God is obvious. At the same time it remains true that Reu and the whole Iowa Synod theolonary.[1] He continued in active service until 1941, and died December 23, 1946. He was a brother of Franz Pieper, for 53 years a teacher of dogmatics at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, of Reinhold Pieper, professor of dogmatics and president of Missouri's Concordia Seminary at Springfield, Illinois, and brother-in-law of Georg Stoeckhardt, the first exegete of the Missouri Synod.[2] In point of view and interests, August Pieper had more in common with Stoeckhardt than with either of his dogmatician brothers. In fact, some of August Pieper's writings can hardly be understood except as

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gical tradition might constitute another valid case study in the tendency toward greater conservatism as a man or a group adjusts to what the American situation demanded.

[1] Three professorships existed at Wauwatosa up to 1915. These were to represent dogmatic, historical, and Biblical theology. Pastoral theology was regularly combined with dogmatics, liturgics with church history, and hermeneutics with Biblical theology. In practice the division was never this precise. Finally in 1915, a fourth professorship was established with no designated subject matter. Continuing in His Word, p. 148. According to the earlier design of the curriculum it would be correct to say that Schaller represented dogmatics, Pieper Biblical studies, and Koehler church history.

[2] The Wauwatosa men had little time for Franz Pieper, and J. P. Koehler is probably taking a slam at the exalted reverence for Franz when he refers to August as "probably the best-gifted of five brothers who with their resolute mother came to America." "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XVI (May, 1943), p. 9.

reactions against and criticism of precisely what his brothers represented theologically.[1]

John Schaller was born in St. Louis, in 1859, the son of Gottlieb Schaller, professor of church history at Concordia Seminary. He received his college education at Northwestern College, and graduated from Concordia Seminary in 1881. Following a pastorate, he was called in 1889 to teach at Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota, at that time the preparatory school, normal training school, and theological seminary of the Minnesota Synod. After the union of the Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin Synods in 1892, the theological department at New Ulm was closed and Dr. Martin Luther College became an academy and normal school to prepare teachers for the Synod's extensive parochial school system. John Schaller became president of the reorganized school in 1892, and continued in that position until he was called to Wauwatosa to become Adolph Hoenecke's successor. At Wauwatosa he taught dogmatics, pastoral theology, and homiletics, and also served as president.[2] He continued in that position until his death on February 5, 1920.

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[1] As, for instance, his obituary of Professor Schaller, Quartalschrift, XVII (April, 1920), pp. 97-101. There he certainly overstates the extent to which Schaller was no typical dogmatician of the old school.

[2] That Schaller was elected as something of a compromise candidate has been noted above. It is also noteworthy, however, that Koehler and Pieper were passed over for the presi-

John Philip Koehler was born January 17, 1859, at Manitowoc, Wisconsin, the son of Philip Koehler, one of the earliest exponents of confessionalism within the Wisconsin Synod. He received his elementary education in a parochial school at Hustisford, Wisconsin. Like Schaller and Pieper, he received his high school and college training at Northwestern College, from which he graduated in 1877, and then went on to Concordia Seminary. For several months in 1878, he served as vicar to Adolph Hoenecke.[1] In 1880, he was ordained into the ministry. His pastorate at Two Rivers, Wisconsin, was terminated by his call in 1888, as dean of men and professor of history at Northwestern College. In 1900, he was called to Wauwatosa as professor of church history, although he also taught New Testament throughout his tenure. In 1920 he became Schaller's

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dency. That not only indicated a distrust of both men but was also an illustration of the tradition that the major professor of dogmatics should direct a seminary. Thus both Walther and Franz Pieper were presidents of Concordia Seminary and the same tradition prevailed at the Springfield Concordia. At Wauwatosa the priority of dogmatics still prevailed, although at Schaller's death in 1920, the election of Koehler broke the tradition. But even during Schaller's tenure, what the tradition symbolized was challenged. See "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XV (November, 1942), pp. 12-16.

[1] Koehler's reminiscences more than 60 years later of his vicarship with Hoenecke furnish a charming account of a German-American pastor in the 1870's. Ibid., XV (October, 1942), pp. 8-11.

successor as president. During the 1929-1930 school year, he was temporarily relieved of his teaching duties, and in 1930, was ousted from his professorship. Following his dismissal (accompanied by neither pension nor severance pay) he moved to Neillsville, Wisconsin, and made his home with his son Karl, who served a small parish there while editing Faith-Life. In 1933, he was formally suspended from the Wisconsin Synod. On September 30, 1951, he died at the age of 92.

The three Wauwatosa men, while quite independent of each other, complemented each other, so that for several years the combination made for what was apparently a very satisfactory faculty (except that it was too small).[1] Schaller was in no sense the equal of either Koehler or Pieper. This is quite obvious from a study of his writings, both his books and his Quartalschrift articles. The writer's interviews with several of his former students confirm the impression that he was well-liked, highly respected, and considered an adequate teacher, but that he made no exciting impact upon his students. Pieper, on the other hand, was a vigorous personality and, by all reports, an extraordinarily able and stimulating classroom teacher. The writer has interviewed a number of Pieper's students including, significantly, several Protestants who have become extremely critical of Pieper because of his role in the Protestant Controversy and his behavior over against Koehler, but even these agree in their praise of Peiper's ability as a teacher, and agree, too, that he stimulated his students to subject their presuppositions to re-examination. His personality, as even a reading of his numerous essays makes clear, was such that he got himself emotionally involved in the issues he dealt with. His make-up was such, too, that he came into close contact with his students and this, no doubt, contributed to the strong personal loyalty that was so often felt toward him. And in sharp distinction from Koehler, he took an active interest in the political affairs of the Synod, as did also Schaller, although to a lesser extent.[1] Pieper was quite obviously a man of action.

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[1] Although the enrollment was never large (generally between 35 and 50) the load on the teachers was excessive. Thus Koehler, for instance, according to the 1918-1919 Catalog, taught New Testament, Hermeneutics, Church History (all periods), Liturgics, Hymnology, and Church Music. The loads of the other men were no less demanding. In addition, the three edited the Theologische Quartalschrift, contributed to the Gemeindeblatt, the Northwestern Lutheran, and Abendschule, preached on special occasions throughout the Synod, and were regularly called on to read papers to pastoral conferences, district conventions, and Synod conventions. In 1915, the load was somewhat lessened with the calling of Hermann Meyer to a fourth professorship. Meyer, however, contributed very little, and nothing original, to the Quartalschrift, and does not really figure in any significant way in the story of the Wauwatosa Theology. Even less does John P. Meyer, called as his brother's successor in 1920, figure. The latter figures only in a negative way in that he was a leader in the repudiation of Koehler and an exponent of the old tradition in dogmatics.

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[1] *Ibid.*, XVI (May, 1943), p. 9.

Koehler was very different from Pieper and not at all inclined to take a hand in synodical politics. As a teacher he seems to have impressed the more able students with the profundity of his thought and his evangelical point of view, which, however, since it included a criticism of the life of the church as he saw it frequently appeared as censoriousness.[1] It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the rank and file of his students were left unimpressed by him.[2] By his own confession he lacked the technique of popular teaching.[3] His impersonal presentation of things stood in sharp contrast to Pieper's more direct, controversial, and exciting presentation. Koehler, too, avoided all associations that might involve him in any special group within the Synod, and he had, in fact, a dread of anything resembling mob action.[1]

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[1] So his son characterizes the impression made by his critical analysis and appraisal of what he confronted. "Our Sainted Teacher, J. P. Koehler," Ibid., XXIV (November, 1951), p. 6.

[2] This impression is based not only on interviews with a number of his students, but also on the significant fact that his ouster from both the Synod and the Seminary met with almost no opposition among his former students who included the great majority of the Wisconsin Synod clergy. Especially revealing are the comments of several Protestants who are frequently thought of as "canonizing" Koehler. Several of these have said that as students they did not really appreciate or understand what Koehler was trying to do. A Wisconsin Synod historian at the Seminary has said of him that "it appeared at times that he intentionally did not make his statements too specific, so that the students would do their own thinking. Consequently they were not always likely to understand him." Im. P. Frey, "Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 1863-1963," Theologische Quartalschrift, LX (July, 1963), p. 212.

[3] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XVI (May, 1943), p. 9.

> The three Seminary colleagues, though of about the same age, gifts, schooling, spirit, and aims, were not by any means built on the same last or repetitious of any model. The fact that each stood on his own feet was calculated, on the one hand, to make for mischief and lead to disagreement; on the other hand, it was an earnest that under God they would stand much more firmly shoulder to shoulder. Their Seminary association was marked by both.[2]

John Schaller's main area of teaching was dogmatics, and his major publication was his Biblical Christology, a Study in Lutheran Dogmatics (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1919).[1] It follows the traditional method of dogmatics. That is, it represents doctrinal propositions in logical sequence and buttresses them by a battery of proof passages. Further discussion of each thesis together with the antithesis follows the proof passages in numbered "Notes." Any criticism of Schaller's methodology at this point is really a criticism of the whole scholastic tradition in Lutheran dogmatics.

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[1] "He [Koehler] was something of a lone rider, that is to say, he didn't want to be influenced and didn't want to influence others excepting by impersonal open testimony. By that policy and practice, he had prevented the organization of a. . .'younger party' in 1892, because parties are bound to become cliques, especially in a small compass. . . When the right open testimony does not create harmony and unanimity, there is something fundamentally wrong with the whole body. That is what the maligned study of history taught Koehler." Ibid. The last sentence is included since it is one of the strongest references by Koehler to his treatment by the Synod and is a kind of latter day defense of his much ridiculed "historische Anschauung."

[2] Ibid., XV (November, 1942), p. 16. The mention of disagreements must refer to Pieper, since there is no evidence for anything but the warmest relationships between Schaller and Koehler. The reference to not being "repetitious of any model" is interesting, since precisely this was Koehler's criticism of the tendency in orthodox circles to pour people into one mold. And since this was written after his ouster it would appear to be his defense of individuality even at the expense of conflict. At any rate he never outgrew his aversion to what he saw as the conformist tendency in Missouri. In such a situation unity, as he saw it, is produced by legalism rather than as a fruit of the Spirit.

However, while certainly not an original exegete, Schaller employs a good deal more caution in his proof texts than do some of his contemporaries. A passage is never torn from its context nor used to prove something entirely aside from its contextual point.[2] Of course, this might be taken for granted, but, as a matter of fact, Schaller's care in this respect is quite impressive, the most impressive thing, perhaps, about the Christology. And its impressiveness is especially obvious if one compares Schaller's work with that done at the same time by such men as Franz Pieper or Elling Hove, professor of dogmatics at Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, from 1901 to 1927, and like most of the men discussed here, a student of Walther. Both Hove and Franz Pieper frequently employ what can only be described as fantastic exegesis in support of a doctrinal thesis.[1] Of the dogmaticians of Midwestern Lutheranism only J. M. Reu, to the writer's knowledge, was superior to Schaller in this respect, but Reu was not, after all, a typical dogmatician of the tradition under discussion.[2]

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[1] This was designed to constitute one part of a projected Lutheran dogmatics in English of the scope and on the scale of Hoenecke's Dogmatik. Theologische Quartalschrift, XVII (April, 1920), p. 129. For an article by Schaller intended to constitute a chapter of the next section, see "The Nature, Origin, and Effects of Saving Faith," Ibid., pp. 129-171.

[2] Schaller here shows that he was influenced by the Pieper-Koehler emphasis on the historical-exegetical method which, among other things, was a protest against the "unprincipled rummaging" for proof passages that characterized so much of conventional dogmatics.

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[1] Typical in Pieper is his discussion of the assumption of Christ's human nature into the person of the Son of God, so that the redemptive work is executed in and through the flesh. Pieper cites as proof Psalm 8:6, which in context is speaking of something not even remotely related. Christian Dogmatics, Vol. II, p. 219. Hove is no more discriminating. To prove that God is "the efficient cause of conversion alone," he cites Jeremiah 31:8, which speaks not of conversion at all but of the return of the Jesus from captivity. Christian Doctrine (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1930), p. 258.

[2] Reu taught at Wartburg Seminary from 1900 to 1943. For a total of 37 of these years he taught dogmatics. He used no standard text (but referred regularly to Luthardt's Kompendium Dogmatik), but relied on his own script. This was revised every four or five years, translated into English by Julius Bodensieck in 1926, and available in manuscript form in the Reu Memorial Library at Wartburg Seminary. Reu's work is distinctly superior in the quality of the exegetical work to Schaller's.

Schaller's care in using the Old Testament is especially noteworthy. In his polemics, too, he is cautious and charitable (excepting, as might be expected, when he mentions *Election* or *Synergism*) and evidences a desire, although often far from successful, to be fair to opposing views.[1] Schaller's dogmatic conclusions are traditional, excepting where he has taken over untraditional positions developed by his colleagues. This latter comes out in his modified view on *Church and Ministry*, as well as in his emphasis on *faith* as "*fides qua creditur*", which view he took over directly from Koehler.[2] Schaller's conclusions are, however, less buttressed by quotations from the fathers than was often true of his contemporaries.

Nevertheless, one draws the conclusion that Schaller's presentation of dogmatics was conventional, although he never

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R. F. Weidner, from 1891 to 1915, professor at the General Council Theological Seminary in Chicago, would also present a contrast to the pattern, but he lies out of the bounds of Midwestern Lutheranism as defined here.

[1] His fear of all *Synergism* is obvious in the *Quartalschrift* article on "Saving Faith." See especially pp. 155-157, where he becomes a good deal less than fair.

[2] *Ibid*., pp. 132-134. For the most complete statement of Koehler's position, see his "Zur die Analogie des Glaubens," *Ibid*., I (January, 1904), pp. 28-36.

meant to overemphasize dogmatics at the expense of exegesis or history. That is, he successfully adjusted himself to the point of view of his two colleagues. The great weakness of Schaller's work remains its methodology, which in its employment of the old proof-text approach could not help but atomize Scripture and thus carry on the tendency of Lutheran orthodoxy to look to Scripture as a compendium of doctrinal propositions. Furthermore, some of Schaller's _Quartalschrift_ writings are distinctly inferior to his _Christology_ and hardly any credit to the _Wauwatosa_ _Theology_.

As an example of his inability to penetrate beyond the old arguments that had involved the Lutheran synods here in constant polemics, and which tended to reach at almost every point an impasse, one might examine his review of Leander Keyser's _Election and Conversion; a Frank Discussion of Dr. Pieper's Book on Conversion and Election_ (Burlington, Iowa: German Literary Board, 1914).[1] Keyser's book, to be sure, is no helpful contribution and quite unfair, but neither does Schaller's review indicate much awareness of its opponent's intention. And especially does Schaller give no indication that he realizes (as both Koehler and August Pieper did) that what the deadlock on _Election_ (_Predestination_) indicated was precisely the inability of the traditional approach to bring the problem to any solution. The same inability on Schaller's part comes out at greater length in his running polemic against the proposed union of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church, the Hauge Synod, and the Norwegian Synod into the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America. The union took place in 1917, but for several years before Schaller had been critical of the document which was to form the basis of the union and which Schaller said both evaded the issues and tolerated false doctrine. The document (Opgjoer, or Madison Agreement) was indeed an evasion rather than a settlement of the issues involved.[1] At the same time, Schaller's Quartalschrift articles did not constitute any constructive criticism and failed to provide any resources for transcending the old deadlock.[2] And in this same connection, the earliest statement the writer has discovered of the strict position on Unionism now dominant within the Wisconsin Synod (and which, most certainly, was neither

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[1] _Ibid_., XI (April, 1940), pp. 140-141.

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[1] A thorough and careful examination of Opgjoer, as well as the whole issue among the Norwegians is found in Nelson's Union Movement Among Norwegian American Lutherans, pp. 402-618.

[2] See, for instance, his "Die Norwegische Sache auf der Synodalkonferenz," IX (October, 1912), pp. 269-286, or his "Die Versammlung der Norwegischen Synode," XII(April, 1915), pp. 73-96.

Koehler's nor A. Pieper's position) was voiced by Schaller in his criticism of an item in the Lutheran Witness, which (1915) recognized the Norwegian Synod as "in fellowship with it" in spite of the fact that the Norwegian Synod was moving toward union with two "unorthodox" synods.[1]

Schaller's orientation also had certain fundamentalist overtones. This is perhaps not surprising, since he was the only one of the three Wauwatosa men who made much use of English and was thus also the one who most interested himself in the American church scene.[2] For an intemperate, dogmatic, and fundamentalistic attack on "modern science" one might read his review of Biblical and Theological Studies, by members of the Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary (New York: Scribner's, 1912).[3] A fundamentalist orientation toward Scripture is also apparent in his "Die Stellung Luther's zur Lehre von der Inspiration der Heiligen Schrift."[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 96. "If the Missouri Synod is 'in fellowship in faith' with the Norwegian Synod, and if it is in such fellowship with the members of the United Norwegian Church, it ought to follow. . .that the Missouri Synod is in fellowship in faith with the United Norwegian Church. But, much worse. Since we of the Joint Synod are in fellowship in faith with the United Norwegian Church, Missouri must, according to its own statement, be in fellowship in faith with us. [sic] The only way out of this terrible conclusion would be to repudiate the statement that the Norwegian Synod belongs to the household of faith with the Missouri Synod."

[2] As see his "Religious Freedom Endangered," Ibid., XVI (April, 1919), pp. 81-101. This was an examination of what he saw as tendencies in post-War America toward enforced conformism.

[3] Ibid., X (April, 1913), pp. 143-145.

Schaller's Quartalschrift contributions are not then especially impressive and fail to set the Wauwatosa Theology apart as anything peculiar. On the other hand, his addresses at the opening of the Seminary school years indicate a deeply evangelical perspective and a healthy and warm concern both for his students and the church in which they are to work. These are, it seems to the writer, better justification than his dogmatical works for the esteem in which Schaller was held by his students and his more talented colleagues. His classroom teaching, too, evidently served to minimize just the weaknesses that came out in his printed articles.

Gerhard Ruediger, a student at Wauwatosa during Schaller's time and later a professor of church history there (1921-1926) until his dismissal during the earlier stages of the Protestant Controversy, characterizes Schaller as follows:

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[1] Ibid., XIV (April, 1917), pp. 81-107. See, too, his "Die Menschliche Seite der Heiligen Schrift," Ibid., VI (April, 1909), pp. 67-81. That Koehler's whole approach was quite different will become clear in an examination of his Quartalschrift series on "Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns," which began in the October, 1914, issue and ran through all issues of 1915.

> Professor Schaller was our undogmatic teacher of dogmatics. He had the fathers speak to us. "Wir lassen jetzt Luther reden." The fathers needed brushing up. They were children of their times, and the times were post-Reformation. Their approach to the truth was unpedagogical and certainly outlived; still this honor shall remain theirs: They preserved the gospel under stress and strain. Schaller introduced us to this way of thinking as well as to the art of building an evangelical sermon.[1]

In addition to his Christology, Schaller published two books. The first of these was his Pastorale Praxis in der Evangelische-Lutherische Freikirche Amerikas, (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1913). It is of special interest, since the very fact of its being written indicates a dissatisfaction with Walther's work on the same subject. Schaller's Book of Books (St. Louis: Concordia, 1918), is a brief and popular introduction to the Scriptures book by book in their historical setting. As such it was widely used. It is not a scholarly book and was not meant to be, and is badly out-of-date, and even when published made no use of the new historical-critical studies. The author's aim was to present material concerning the writers of the various Biblical books, the circumstances under which each book was written, the special purpose and message of each, and then to lead the student to read each book, and thus the Scripture as a whole, coherently. The book then was an attempt to present the Scriptures historically and as a connected whole, and as such, too, it personified the intention of the Wauwatosa Theology.[1] The book represents pedagogically a definite improvement over the Bible-story approach which was and continues to be current within orthodox circles and under which method the Bible is presented as a series of largely disconnected stories, each with its own lesson to teach. This method not only lends itself to moralizing, but quite effectively prevents the student's grasping the whole as a connected story of salvation.

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[1] "Anent the Centennial," Faith-Life, XXIV (November, 1951), pp. 9-10. The Ruediger essay is a thoroughly nostalgic look back at the glories of Wauwatosa, and at this point is probably an idealization of Schaller.

That John Schaller, whatever his limitations, was thought of as one of the trio of men responsible for the Wauwatosa Theology is undeniable. Equally undeniable is the fact that he was no theological pioneer. If Schaller were to be taken as the personification of the Wauwatosa Theology one could say only that the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary was one of several orthodox American Lutheran seminaries with the sort of distinctive personality that any such institution is bound to acquire simply by virtue of its historical existence. What is true, however, is that Schaller in his own way actually did contribute in the sense--and in its context this is no mean accomplishment--that he accepted the new place assigned to dogmatics as simply one among several theological disciplines and not even the primary discipline. Schaller accepted and was willing to live in a context where dogmatics was put on the defensive and became, not the starting point of theology, but rather the tool which systematized the fruits of what were produced in the historical-exegetical disciplines. And Koehler's definition of the province of dogmatics, to which August Pieper also subscribed, was normative for Schaller as well.[1]

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[1] As see, Koehler's "Das Zusammenhaengende Studium der Heiligen Schrift, der Kern des Theologischen Studiums," Theologische Quartalschrift, XXIII (January, 1926), pp. 1-12. For a more pointed articulation of the Wauwatosa ideal see Karl Koehler's "Our Master Mission," Faith-Life, IV (March, April, May, 1931), pp. 10-12, 7-10, 6-11.

And because this was true of Schaller it was also true, aside from the qualities of his personality, that he was so highly appreciated by his colleagues. And thus August Pieper could assess his place within the Wauwatosa faculty as follows:

> Schaller hat zwar den theologischen Geist unsers Seminars nicht gemacht; der war vor ihm da, und er trat in denselben noch mit manchen Einzelanschauungen ein,

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[1] For an articulation of Koehler's conception of dogmatics, see his Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte, pp. vi-vii.

> deren er sich im Lauf der Jahre entledigte. Aber er hat auch seinen theologischen Geist nicht erst hier empfangen, er brachte ihn in allen Grundzuegen mit: den Geist des Luthersch-Paulischen rein geistlichen Evangeliums, das aller Gesetzlichkeit bar ist. . . . So stand er von Anfang an mit uns Pieper and Koehler fuer das eine grosse Ding ein: vor allem andern das Studium des Evangeliums unmittelbar aus der Quelle, selbstaendiges Schriftstdium, nicht spruchweises, sondern buchweises Bibelstudium, schliesslich aus dem Urtext.[1]

Koehler, likewise, in his typical way, compared Schaller to his father, Professor Gottlieb Schaller (a teacher at Northwestern College during Koehler's student days), and in so doing expressed both an appreciation and an assessment of the son.

> That Schaller, Sr., had his logic intus we later could tell from his fine, simple construction of a sermon. Besides, this early St. Louis teacher, though not an original mind nor theological pioneer, had the ability to adopt the right idea of another, use it, and give the other credit for it, and this is another of the things he transmitted to his son, John.[2]

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[1] "Professor Johannes Schaller," Theologische Quartalschrift, XVII (January, 1920), pp. 98-99.

[2] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XVI (May, 1943), p. 9. A striking illustration of Schaller's ability to adopt new views is seen in his transition on the Church-Ministry position. In 1909 he had read a paper to mixed Missouri-Wisconsin pastoral conference in Milwaukee on the subject of the Amtslehre. The paper is apparently unavailable, but ac-

August Pieper, in contrast to Schaller, was an original thinker and undeniably a leader. A study of his writings in the Quartalschrift as well as interviews with a goodly number of his former students leave the distinct impression that he had a forceful and controversial personality, an unusually alert mind, but with a tendency toward superficiality, although this last generalization is challenged by his able, careful, and penetrating study of the second part of the book of Isaiah.[1] J. P. Koehler, whatever their personality clashes were, had high admiration for Pieper's ability and ways that "he would have made good in any situation, by virtue of his abundant energy and stamina.[2]

Professor Pieper's study of Isaiah confined itself to the last twenty-six chapters of the book. It shows, not only a good grasp of the historical situation of the book, but

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cording to Koehler, the presentation was entirely according to the Missourian tradition. That is, it was maintained that the only divinely instituted office in the church was the pastoral office in the local congregation, and that all other church offices are auxiliary to this office and merely offshoots from it. Ibid., XVI (April, 1943), p. 9. That Schaller later accepted the position of his two colleagues is obvious, for instance, from his "Von der Gottlichkeit der Berufung in den Kirchlichen Dienst," Theologische Quartalschrift, X (January, 1913), pp. 147-170.

[1] Jesaias II. (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1919.)

[2] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XVI (May, 1943), p. 9.

a thorough grasp of the content and, what is most impressive, it represents an imaginative treatment of the theme. Its treatment of the prophetic character is sound with an understanding both of the immediate context of the material as well as the relationship between the book itself and the use to which it was put by the New Testament writers. Pieper's approach would not, of course, meet the demands of the modern critical scholar since the author was bound by presuppositions that would no longer be accepted. But neither was Pieper entirely unaware of the critical problems involved nor did he simply dismiss by polemicizing away the theories of the higher critics. Nor was his treatment of some of the problems with which the higher critics concerned themselves as traditional as was common in his circles. Thus, for instance, while he held to the unity of the book of Isaiah he did recognize the problems involved in the issue and did not simply close the issue by quoting New Testament references to prove the unity of the whole as written by one historical Isaiah.[1]

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[1] We may assume that Pieper was aware of and approved of Koehler's above-mentioned treatment of the treatment of the historical character of Job. This, among other things, could not help but make for caution in using New Testament quotes as proofs of authorship.

> To be sure, I do not maintain that the manner in which the New Testament assumes the authorship of the book of Isaiah in itself denies the possibility that there are within the book fragments of materials from other sources. . . . I do not believe, for instance, in regard to the Pentateuch, that Moses wrote about his own death, burial, funeral rites, and obituary. . . or that he compiled the list of Edomite kings in Genesis 36:31 ff. I believe that there are both post- and ante-Mosaic elements in the Pentateuch. . . I hold it very possible in Isaiah that we not only here and there have examples of textual corruptions,but also whole sections that came from other hands . . . I hold it possible that chapters 36-39, for instance, were inserted by other hands and that later here and there the text was edited.[1]

The book does indicate that Pieper was an exegete of real ability and is an excellent illustration in practice of the exegetical-historical method so praised by the Wauwatosa Theology. The book is also clear evidence of August Pieper's genuine ability as an exegete and scholar, even though, in general, he failed to live up to the promise of this work. It is certain that, if the work done during the same period at two other seminaries of orthodox synods is any indication, Pieper's conception and practice of Old Testament exegesis were distinctly superior to that generally obtained in conservative Midwestern Lutheran circles, and to a far lesser degree was Pieper hindered by dogmatic presuppositions. From 1897-1917, Olaf E. Brandt was professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary at St. Paul, Minnesota, of the old Norwegian Synod, and after the organization of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, professor of the same subject from 1917 to 1930 at Luther Theological Seminary. The writer has studied carefully Brandt's lectures on the Psalms as dictated to his students in the early 1900's.[1] For Brandt context meant almost nothing and his static Biblicism meant that an almost complete Christology could be constructed from the Psalms, so that they were, in effect, indiscriminately rummaged through for passages of Messianic prophecy. Ludwig E. Fuerbringer, professor of Old Testament at Concordia Theological Seminary from 1893-1943, was, to be sure, a more careful exegete than Brandt, but he, too, was dominated by an unhistorical Biblicism that paid little attention to the Old Testament in its own context, and carried to its logical conclusion would make the New Testament an unnecessary appendage to the Old.[1] Furthermore, the seriousness with which exegesis as exegesis was taken at Wauwatosa, and by Pieper, stands as a contrast to the general Lutheran situation in the context and time. This contrast is perhaps personified by Richard C. H. Lenski, who although he was a professor of dogmatics from 1911 to 1936 at the Ohio Synod Capital Seminary at Columbus, Ohio, did his writing in the field of exegesis and produced several commentaries on New Testament books.[2] That Lenski was in fact a systematic theologian (and of the old school) who also did exegesis is evidenced by the fact that his approach to exegesis was dominated by dogmatical presuppositions. This is illustrated, for example, in his _Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans_ (Columbus, Lutheran Book Concern, 1936), where he found Paul to support both the "_intuitu fidei_" and "_analogy of faith_" concepts as Ohio had promoted these in the _Election Controversy_.

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[1] Ibid., pp. XXVI-XXVII. The writer's translation.

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[1] The manuscript was loaned to the writer by Sigurd C. Ylvisaker, a student of Brandt's from 1904-1907. During the 1948-1949 academic year the writer studied Isaiah under Ylvisaker at Bethany Lutheran Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota. Pieper's Jesaias was used as a text and was appreciated by Ylvisaker. However, at several crucial points the teacher took issue with Pieper and generally regarded Pieper as less conservative than was desirable.

Jesaias II was Pieper's only published book and also the only thing published by him that could be said to constitute a scholarly and systematic exegetical study. He did, however, contribute a number of worthwhile articles on a wide range of subjects in the Quartalschrift and especially wrote heavily on the subject of Church and Ministry between 1910 and 1920. Pieper took an active part in the discussion on that subject and is, in fact, often thought of as the author of the Wisconsin Synod position. That he popularized the position within the Wisconsin Synod is certainly true. It is also true that he most forcefully of the Wauwatosa men articulated the difference between the Wisconsin Synod view and that of the Missouri Synod. Whether or not Pieper really grasped the essence of what Koehler had in mind in his criticism of the Missourian view is another question and the writer would maintain that he missed the real point. The doctrine itself, however, will be examined in another context. It is sufficient here to point out that Pieper's position took its starting point from Koehler's exegetical-historical study of the development of the concept and application of the Church and the Ministry in the actual historical development of the Church. That is, Koehler began with a protest against any legalistic approach to the Scripture which would look for rules and regulations by which to order the external organization. Thus Koehler sought not to establish a new dogma but rather to indicate through exegesis and historical study that there is no divinely established form for either Church or Ministry. Thereby, he meant to emphasize the freedom of the Gospel to create its own forms. Our present form of a congregation and the particular form of the pastoral office are both of them historical developments and in that sense not divinely instituted. Yet insofar as the forms exist to serve the Gospel and to build up the Body of Christ they are creations of the Gospel and thus divinely instituted. The emphasis here in Koehler was distinctly charismatic rather than juridical and part and parcel of his criticism of every "gesetzlich Wesen unter uns."[1]

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[1] The best example of Fuerbringer's work is his _Book of Job_ (St. Louis: Concordia, 1927).

[2] For his one venture into Old Testament, see his _Eisenach Old Testament Selections_ (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1925). The same generalizations are true here as with the work of Brandt and Fuerbringer.

However, in reading August Pieper's many articles on the subject one is bothered by something which runs through almost all of them and which appears very much like the substitution of one dogmatic tenet for another, and the missing of the wider implications of J. P. Koehler's approach to the same subject.[2] What is especially troublesome is Pieper's interest in suspension and excommunication, where he seems more interested in establishing the validity of synodical suspension as genuine excommunication in the same sense as that declared by a local congregation than in getting at the real issues involved in any form of church discipline. In this sense, Pieper was giving a distinctly legalistic twist to a view which meant precisely to protest all legalism. In fact, the Wauwatosa conception was later used precisely in this legalistic sense in the Protestant Controversy when it was claimed that also the Synod could excommunicate and thus a man or congregation suspended from the Synod was thereby to be treated as a heathen and publican. Ironically enough, August Pieper's own son so used the doctrine of the Wauwatosa Theology and thus read St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Wilton, Wisconsin, out of the "realm of the Church of Jesus Christ."[1] What is original in the Wisconsin Synod position and what deserves to be treated as an evangelical contribution in keeping with the intent of the Wauwatosa Theology is not so much the specific formulation which was undeniably the work of Pieper, as the desire both to distinguish between meaning and form and to draw a sharp dichotomy between Law and Gospel. In this respect, Koehler must be regarded as the father of the Wisconsin Synod conception.

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[1] For a brief but well-articulated statement of his basic approach see p. 69 of his review of Georg Stoeckhardt's Kommentar Ueber den Ersten Brief Petri, Theologische Quartalschrift, X (January, 1913), pp. 62-70.

[2] Of Pieper's many articles, see especially "Die Suspension noch Einmal," Ibid., VIII (July, 1911), pp. 131-164; "Zur Verstaendigung in der Gegenwaertigen Diskussion ueber Kirche und Amt," Ibid., IX (July, 1912), pp. 182-208; and "Luthers Lehre von Kirche und Amt," Ibid.,(July, 1917), pp. 211-241.

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[1] The whole letter of February 28, 1928, is reprinted in Faith-Life, III (September, 1930), p. 11. In a letter to the same congregation of March 22, 1928, Gerhard Pieper corrected the statement to say that the members "have excluded themselves from the true visible Church." Ibid., p. 12.

It would not be fair, however, to imply that Pieper had no conception of what Koehler was trying to do, nor to imply that he was legalistically oriented. This would not be true, however much one detects legalistic overtones in some of his work. In season and out of season Pieper waged unrelenting war against everything that appeared to him as legalistic. If he sometimes missed the mark, overstated his case (and he was, to say the least, given to exaggerated statements), and fell himself into what he condemned, it is also true that he could articulate very well what the Wauwatosa Theology intended, and thus, too, lend his support to the intent behind all of Koehler's work.[1]

Pieper was strongly interested in the political life of the Synod and also involved himself in it.[2] This helps also to account for the fact that he was not primarily a reflective thinker and his writings, with the exception of the Isaiah study, are largely of a practical nature. This does not mean that they were unimportant. At their best they were means of applying on the practical level what Koehler was teaching and writing in his impersonal style. As an example of Pieper's practical application one might cite his "Unser Uebergang ins Englische."[1] It may be said without overstating the case, that Pieper was an able theologian and a good analyst and that his work had a wholesome effect upon the Synod. There was present in him a freshness of viewpoint, a criticism of traditionalism which so easily within orthodox communions can unconsciously degenerate into little more than a restatement of the fathers, and a continuous emphasis upon self-examination and criticism. This latter is important, since again orthodoxy tends to operate as though the life of the church will be correct if the doctrine is kept pure. In fact, precisely this tendency was a major criticism that the Wauwatosa Theology had against traditional orthodoxy.[2] And Pieper, more pointedly than either of the other two Wauwatosa men, criticized the tradition of Lutheran orthodoxy as it held sway in Midwestern American Lutheranism and as it has perhaps been best personified by the legacy of Franz Pieper and John Fritz, to be dealt with more specifically in the next section of this study.

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[1] As only one example of an extremely well-articulated statement, see his "Dem Gerechten ist kein Gesetz gegeben," Theologische Quartalschrift, XIII (January, 1916), pp. 17-49.

[2] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XVI (May, 1943), p. 9.

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[1] Theologische Quartalschrift, XV, XVI (October, 1918; January, April, July, October, 1919), pp. 233-259, 43-66, 121-138, 179-187, 257-276. In spite of his rambling nature, it is a penetrating study. Although Pieper loved German and never really made the transition to English, he makes no reactionary plea to hold on to the German, but he realizes, too, that much more is involved in the transition than translating the literature and producing preachers who can use English adequately. The whole life and character of the group will be tested in a way that requires a thorough grasp of the context which has hitherto been communicated through the form of the German language and culture, and only if the difference can be detected and the identity of content and form transcended can the transition be made without destroying the character of the group.

[2] For a telling illustration of precisely this tendency

> The dogmatical-practical training given to our pastors until recently, a training which dispensed with direct Scripture study and which held sway almost exclusively, was unavoidably bound to flatten out and ossify our orthodoxy. In this method the intellect played the star role and was engaged to such an extent that the heart could not come into its own. Theology was taught in nicely formulated abstractions (dogmatisch-begrifflich). It was acquired and understood intellectually. In like manner it was preached to the people from the pulpit, taught to the youth in the religious classes (Christenlehre), and to the children in catechetical instructions and in the parochial schools; a predominantly intellectual indoctrination was the inevitable result, barren of spirit and life and devoid of heart. Our fathers schooled as they were along dogmatical lines, were oblivious to a particular psychological truth, which is this: The intellect, the human faculty of reasoning, is essentially legalistic,

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in orthodoxy, see Koehler's account of the Synodical Conference meeting in New Ulm, Minnesota, in 1908. "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XV (November, 1942), pp. 15-16. The larger subject involved will be treated under "Gesetzlich Wesen unter Uns."

> governed entirely by the laws of logic, assembles facts, dissects, combines, and draws conclusions with absolute stringency. Therefore, we resent the approach and attack of a rationalizing person and regard him as a spiritual tyrant, who is bent on bringing us to hell and to crush our personality. That is why every truth transmitted by a predominantly intellectual method inevitably becomes legalistic in time, the Gospel itself is turned into a law and so loses its own intrinsic peculiarity, its life, and its divine power.[1]

The above quotation is typical of Pieper both for its thrust and its tendency to overstatement. That is, Koehler often made much the same point but in quite a different way and with an appreciation, not expressed here, of the problems involved in the issue. It is also true that Pieper, here as elsewhere, was in his polemic inclined toward a negativism that was better at criticism than at construction. At the same time, there can be little question but that Pieper was talking from experience and protesting a reality, although one has the distinct impression that had Pieper been sympathetically acquainted with pietism (as he was not) his criticism of intellectual approaches to theology might well have resulted in a full-blown anti-intellectualism. To some extent the later Beitz Paper

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[1] "Jubilaeumsnachgedanken," Theologische Quartalschrift, XX (October, 1923), pp. 260-261. The writer's translation.

(1926), did result in precisely this, even though it will be one of the burdens of this study to defend it from the attacks leveled against it.

August Pieper, however much he differed from his more famous brother Franz, was like him a great polemicist and critic. The two were alike, too, in that neither was inclined to be moderate. Both saw issues in black and white, which was less defensible for August in view of the fact that a basic concern of the Wauwatosa Theology was to avoid precisely the simplitism that characterized orthodoxy. Both Piepers were given to somewhat extravagant generalizations, to overstatements, and to lack of sympathy for what they were attacking. The kind of ambiguity that Koehler tended to see all over in history was typical of neither of them. Where the two Piepers differed was in what they polemicized against. While Franz saw "false doctrine" all around him and thus concerned himself almost exclusively with "die reine Lehre," August was relatively unconcerned about this, and properly so, since a neglect of doctrinal formulation was hardly the danger of his Lutheran environment. Rather, his concern was with the everyday life of the church, and here he fought legalism, formalism, and dead orthodoxy. Unlike Koehler, Pieper was seldom moderate or impersonal in his testimony. While there was a tendency toward an intuitive subjectivism in both Koehler and Pieper, this tendency was redeemed in Koehler by his careful historical scholarship and his charity. Pieper, on the other hand, was obviously a less careful scholar. What he did do was to apply sharply, shockingly, and concretely what he felt the *Wauwatosa Theology* ought to be witnessing. Always he was insisting on self-examination, self-criticism, and reorientation, and always he tried to hit home and thus call to repentance.

Typical of Pieper, and representing him both at his best and his worst, are such statements as the following:

> We are spiritual mechanics, agents of prefabricated and assembly-line products. All that remains of our sermons is a rehashing of the same old, stale stuff. We add nothing new to what we once learned, the same treadworn speeches and phrases Sunday after Sunday, year in and year out. We have reached the bottom of our barrel, we find no pleasure in our own thoughts, they have long since become boring to us. At that, the machine purrs smoothly, the people even compliment us, which places the final seal on our spiritual stagnation.[1]

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[1] From August Pieper's *Referat*, read at the 1919 Wisconsin Synod convention at New Ulm, Minnesota, published in the 1919 *Synodalbericht der Allgeurienen Evangelische-Lutherischen, Synode von Wisconsin und Anderen Staaten*. (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1919), p. 31. Translation by Alex Hillmer.

> We have already begun to make of our whole Christianity and Christian life, a matter of form, inherited with no effort from the fathers, and are about to keep the shell and to lose the kernel.[1]

> This is in very fact "Laodicean lukewarmness." How prevalent among us is not the presumption that in comparison with others we are merely spiritual weakness, it is hypocritical Pharisaism.[2]

> We preach the pure Word, do not shy away from reproving sin, and add no qualifications (Wenn und Aber) to the Gospel. We uphold discipline and order in the parish. We hold pure against the lodge. We insist on confessional announcements and the parish school. We visit the sick, are punctual and conscientious in the exercise of our calling. . . . Now we need only add "All these things have I kept from my youth. What lack I yet," and we have the rich young ruler before us in life size.[3]

> Patristic theology draws the curtain of Moses over the face of the Holy Scripture so that we, satisfied with the originally acquired theological fund, really no more go to the Scriptures in original study, don't really get to be at home in them, do not progress in knowledge, at conferences and Synod meetings only rehash the dogmatical capital brought along from school. . . and in the pulpit ride the same empty phraseology, exhaust our reserves, get fed up on our

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[1] *Ibid*., p. 22.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 19.

[3] "Eine Zeitpredigit an der Diener der Kirche, auch zur Weitergabe an ihre Germeinden," *Theologische Quartalschrift*, XV (July, 1915), p. 214. Translation by Alex Hillmer.

> own stale thoughts, and bore our audiences, no less.[1]

Such quotations could be multiplied, but these suffice to give an impression of Pieper's preoccupations. They also suffice to indicate the extent to which his preoccupations concerned themselves with what he saw as the destructive effects of formalism and traditionalism. In his polemic and in his continuous criticism of the life of the church he was popularizing and applying the motifs that ran through Koehler's works, although the sharp and frequently careless method of Pieper was in distinct contrast to Koehler's method. Especially noteworthy, is the fact that the Beitz Paper, which Pieper later attacked so bitterly, while Koehler was forced to defend it, was a peculiarly "Pieperish" document. The 1926 paper of William Beitz, although somewhat more vulnerable to attack because of careless doctrinal statements, was basically and quite obviously attacking the same kind of formalism which Pieper had consistently attacked. Even the phraseology was like Pieper's, almost to the extent of coming close to plagiarism.[2] For this Beitz was charged with both false doctrine and judging of hearts.[1] It can also be said quite safely that the defenders of the Beitz Paper, known as the Protestants because of their protesting the actions of the Synod, although regarded as disciples of Koehler, have learned their polemics and their methodology more from Pieper than from the mild, careful, and impersonal Koehler. Faith-Life is abundant testimony to this.

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[1] "Quo Propier Luthero, eo melior Theologus," Ibid., XIV (January, 1917), p. 64. Translation by Alex Hillmer.

[2] Note will be taken later of Paul Hensel's The Wauwatosa Gospel: Which Is It? (Marshfield, Wisconsin: The Protestant Conference Press, 1928), which in part is precisely an examination of the Beitz Paper along with statements by Pieper that had appeared over the years in his Quartalschrift articles.

The story of August Pieper's repudiation of the Beitz Paper and in the end his attacks upon Koehler does not belong to this chapter. Here it need only be noted that Pieper was the polemicist and popularizer of the Wauwatosa Theology. In spite of his tendency toward negativism, carelessness, and superficiality he was without question a mighty force in attacking the strangle hold of scholastic dogmatics within his own group. It must be noted, too, that no logical and defensible case can be made for Pieper's final repudiation of Koehler except that personality conflicts, if not jealousy, lay at its basis. In fact, nothing in the controversial Beitz Paper, not even its theological carelessness, nor anything in the basic protest of the Protestants, should have been foreign to August Pieper or to the Synod which for years had been giving ear to him.

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[1] See, in addition to the famous Gutachten of the Wauwatosa faculty, Professor J. P. Meyer's "Brief Review," Ibid., XXV (April, 1928), pp. 135-160.

Like August Pieper, J. P. Koehler was primarily an observer and critic of the empirical life of the church. But unlike Pieper, who was preoccupied with his immediate context and who operated to a large extent on the basis of his reactions to what he saw and experienced, Koehler was a careful student, broad in his perspective, and cautious in his interpretations.[1]

Reference has already been made to Jaroslav Pelikan's assessment of Koehler as well as to Karl Koehler's analysis of his father. The latter's analysis is offered here at more length, since, however extravagant and uncritical it might appear to the outsider, it nevertheless catches the dominant motifs in Koehler's viewpoint and, even more importantly, undoubtedly indicates the way he liked to think of his own work.

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[1] Although this generalization is true, this is not to say that Koehler was not at times also given to carelessness and overstatements. Thus, for instance, his "Die Aeusserlichkeit des Papsttums Gegenueber der Innerlichkeit von Luthers Reformationswerk," Ibid., XIV (January, 1917), pp. 15-39, reasserts a good many of the traditional anti-Catholic cliches. So, too, Koehler is regularly inclined to idealize all things German and to write off all English contributions as superficial and external. See for this his "European Forces that Made American Church History," Ibid., XVI (October, 1919), pp. 225-256.

> Koehler's work may be summed up as a study and teaching of life, with the gospel as the touchstone of life and as the only source of true life. . . . His scholarship is not a painstaking Fachgelehrtentum, but rather a comprehensive survey and analysis of all human life, thought, and emotion, as the pages of his Lehrbuch. . . with their strong emphasis of general history, particularly Kulturgeschichte, reveal. With this preoccupation, Koehler's articles in the Theologische Quartalschrift naturally are rarely of an academic nature and never deal with the abstract definition of doctrine, but always bite into the very life of the Church and of the individual believer, applying to it the truths of life as Koehler discovers them in the Gospel and in history . . . .
>
> In the positions taken by Koehler the undercurrent of thought, which again naturally springs from his preoccupation with the Bible, history, music, art, and literature as the expressions of life (. . .Unsere poetisch-musikalischen Ausdrucksformen, XIV, XVIII), and which is coming to the surface in his recent writings and challenging current opinion, belongs to the realm of psychology, to wit; that the seat of the understanding and knowledge of truth is in the feeling of the heart; that there issuch knowledge before the discussive reasoning of the mind sets in and that in the later life of faith this function of the heart remains the all-important one; that the reasoning faculties of the mind can at best but register this knowledge and understanding of the heart and at that not fully and adequately; that if they do more, the life and thought becomes untrue. . . .
>
> This latent psychology seems to have dictated Koehler's early opposition to doctrinal discussion that centers in the abstract reasoning and definition of the mind and to the Bible as a code of proof texts; hence, his early insistence on the study of the Bible in a connected form (as the message and history of salvation. . .) and of

> history. . .; hence, his growing distrust of preoccupation with dogmatics as a mischiefmaker. . .and final challenge of dogmatics as the mistress of theological training (Der Wert der Dogmatik, Milwaukee Conference Lecture, 1921?). . . .
>
> Koehler's work has been a steady challenge of the life and thought and education of the day. . . . As a matter of fact it should be noted that his ideas have not gained general currency, but even though he has a reputation for censoriousness owning to his critical analysis and appraisal of everything he is confronted with, the effect of his practical counsel and work in intra- and inter-synodical controversies has been chiefly irenic, without yielding anything of Scriptural or Lutheran doctrine, by virtue of his principle that one should be understood as he means to be understood. . . .
>
> Theology, or its equivalent, the preaching of the gospel, in Koehler's conception is art, which he has defined as follows: "Kunst nenne ich das, wenn einer von den ganz grossen Gedanken, die an der Wurzel alles menschlichen Daseins liegen und die einmal am juengsten Tage zur Entscheidung kommen, in eines begabten Menschen Seele faellt, und ihn dann so erfasst, dass er sich nicht mehr lassen kann und ihn zum Ausdruck bringen muss, und er redet dann, oder singt, oder spielt, oder malt, oder baut, jenachdem ihm die Gabe gegeben ist, und es kommt dann heraus, schlicht und einfaeltig, ohne alle Kuenstelei, ohne alles Getue, klar und wahrhaftig. Das kann dann ein Kind nachempfinden, und ein hoher Geist kann es nicht ausschoepfen. Das nennt man Kunst.[1]

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[1] *Faith-Life*, XXIV (November, 1951), pp. 5-6.

The above quotation is especially interesting in that it clearly brings out Koehler's basic presupposition of the dominance of the will over the intellect. What a man loves determines him and not what he knows, thus his basic distrust of intellectualism and the whole Greek tradition. In line with this is an almost deterministic conception of man as a victim, for better or for worse, of influences outside of himself and which determine for him what he loves, hates, wants, and doesn't want. To talk, for instance, of self-determination does not really make much sense. Nor do any abstract intellectual processes much influence a man's inner being.

> Men do their thinking and living by force of the innermost instincts and motives of their souls, and that determines their emotions, their thoughts, their will, and action. In their secret souls, or more or less subconsciously, men have a more or less complete vision, an all-around idea (video and idein), a general way of seeing or viewing all things that gives them their conceptions of right and wrong, of what is useful or harmful, beautiful or ugly, of what they want or don't want; and this idea may become more clearly defined or it may undergo changes according to the inward and outward experiences of their lives. But when men think that they have composed this picture by impersonal reasoning, they deceive themselves. Not according to rules, theses, or dogmas does life proceed, but according to instinctive ideas, bound up with what they are with all their

> soul, with all their strength, with all
> their mind.[1]

The Karl Koehler analysis of his father is interesting, too, for pointing up J. P. Koehler's somewhat naive and romantic notions of art. Art is always truer to life than science since art gets at the meaning while science can only demonstrate external facts. For this reason Koehler in his church history teaching introduced illustrated lectures "on the history of the arts in general, including music, in order to demonstrate. . .the development of the general mentality during the different periods of history," but for so doing he was charged with wasting class time on "allotria."[2] Art, in turn, is truest and greatest precisely when it is least reflective and sophisticated.[3] Great art, and also profound expressions of truth, are spontaneous and unreflective and take on the artless simplicity of folklore. Thus, for instance, the simple unadorned pillars of early Greek architecture are great art, while the later ornate style was intellectualistic and artificial. The sixteenth century Lutheran hymn is vastly superior to the seventeenth century hymn for a variety of reasons but above all because the latter is overly given to introspection and reflection. The Apostles' Creed Koehler (in true romantic style) regarded as folkart and thus common and ecumenical. The Nicene Creed is another story.

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[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," *Ibid.*, XI (February, 1938), p. 6. This, too, is part of why it is so important to get at what a man or group *means* to say rather than to judge by the bare words. That is, one must get at the intent beneath the outward form and intellectual mode of expression, since the latter does not necessarily reveal the essence.

[2] "As to Appreciation of Art," *Ibid.*, IV (May, 1931), p. 4. The same article contains Koehler's defense of Spengler as an artist.

[3] "Art is always true; it is never studied, but always a natural gift and therefore, free in its unstudied movements." "The Art of Making Books," *Ibid.*, IV (April, 1931), p. 14.

> True art is not given to reflections, as in the nature of the Nicene Creed and the Quicunque. The Apostolic Creed grew in the minds of seven centuries right along as the property of the people, so that we cannot trace the intellectual work of the individuals; this creed is folklore. The other two creeds were introduced in the liturgy as measures of the school and government.[1]

Koehler's conception of art and psychology also meant that there was always present in him a dangerous tendency toward anti-intellectualism and an overemphasis on intuitive judgments. Thus, for instance, Spengler appealed to Koehler because he was an artist and even if he did go wrong in numerous details (as Koehler conceded), art can get at truth in a sense that science and accumulation of facts cannot. Thus, however, Koehler laid the foundation for the possibility that his disciples would neglect the detail work and go right into the more interesting task of offering grand scale generalizations.[1] What saved Koehler was precisely the fact that personally he never despised the careful intellectual task of scholarship, his conscious attempt always to avoid overstatements, his realization of the tentative character of all human judgments, nis realization, too, that a criticism of the methodology of dogmatics is no guarantee against dogmatism. His historical work with its breadth of interest gave him high appreciation of the efforts at certain crucial times in history of theologians to carefully formulate doctrinal statements. Never did he approve of intellectual short cuts and, in fact, a basic criticism against Lutheran orthodoxy was precisely the fact that it was a short cut.[2] At the same time it was orthodoxy's attempt to take doctrinal formulation seriously that meant he had always to defend it even while subjecting it to criticism. Pietism, in spite of its stress on feeling and the heart and the personal experience of religion, things which Koehler, too, stressed, he sharply criticized.

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[1] "Liturgical Comments," Ibid., XI (September, 1938), p. 16. The whole article is a defense of worship as art in the sense of folkart which by its very nature is both common and ecumenical.

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[1] His disciples, unfortunately, in writing for Faith-Life, have by no means always been free from this weakness. See, for instance, Marcus Koch's "Gnosticism--Old and New," Ibid., XXXI (July, 1959), pp. 9-12, which is obviously an attempt to deal in Koehler's manner, but the whole is superficial and the generalizations are unsupported.

[2] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," Ibid., XIV (May, 1941), p. 10.

> The pietists turned away from the intellectual struggle to define correct doctrine insofar as correct doctrine became indifferent to them. Inasmuch as they deserted the dialectical work of doctrine, sentimentality grew up among them with subjectivism and legalism.[1]

Almost all of Koehler's influence was felt through his classroom teaching, his published works, and his Quartalschrift articles. There is, however, no indication that he ever made any impression on the Missouri Synod, and certainly not on any of the other Lutheran groups. This means that what impression he did make was confined to the Wisconsin Synod.

His writings embrace the whole field of theology from hermeneutics through hymnology. Dogmatics as such he neglected but the relationship between dogmatics and the other branches of theology is a major theme running through all his writings.[1] In all his comments on dogmatics and his sharp criticism of its pre-eminence in the Lutheran tradition, it is, of course, important to realize that he always presupposed the particular kind of dogmatics associated with the scholastic orthodoxy of the seventeenth century. However, even had he come from a background with a different tradition of dogmatics it may well be that he was too much of an artist in temperament to have much sympathy for the particular kind of systematic thought required by dogmatic theology.[2] In point of fact, however, he was acquainted firsthand primarily with that kind of dogmatics which orthodoxy cultivated, and where "Holy Scripture became a reference book, and proof from Scripture took the form of the _dicta probantic_ which were not always apt. . . to offer this to the students in handy compendiums."[1]

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[1] "Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns," Theologische Quartalschrift, XII (April, 1915), pp. 103-104. The writer's translation.

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[1] He did, however, once teach dogmatics for a period of several months after the death of John Schaller in 1920. The subject at hand was _Election_, which Koehler taught on the basis of an exegetical treatment of the relevant Pauline texts, especially those in Ephesians. See, for a student's evaluation of the experience, G. A. Zeisler's "Our Sainted Teacher," _Ibid_., XXIV (November, 1951), p. 5.

[2] He tended to believe, for instance, that dogmatics even at its best and although necessary, nevertheless stood in much the same relationship to theology that the rules of correct grammar do to the teaching of language and literature. "Der Glaube, das Urwesen des Christenlebens auf der Erde," _Theologische Quartalschrift_, XXIV (July, 1927), p. 221. Even here, however, he thinks of dogmatics as atomistic, making the individual doctrines appear as so and so many separate entries, the understanding of which is acquired according to so and so many rules. "Doctrinal instruction fares just as badly as

In exegesis Koehler devoted relatively little attention to the details of the grammar and text, and concentrated instead on the interpretation of the whole. In the field of exegesis he produced two large-scale studies, his Der Brief Paul's on die Galater (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1910), and his much superior and unified Pauli Hochgesang von Christo; Auslegung des Briefes an die Epheser. The latter was Koehler's major work after his retirement (except for the translation, revision, and completion of his Geschichte der Synode von Wisconsin), and was based on lectures he delivered to meetings of the Protestant Conference during the 1930's. These were then edited and published in Faith-Life, beginning with the January, 1936, issue and continuing month by month until July, 1937. The whole has since been translated by Elmer Sauer and Gerhard Reudiger and under the title "Paul's Rhapsody in Christ," appeared in Faith-Life beginning in the issue of May, 1957, and continuing in most monthly issues until September, 1961.

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does language instruction when it neglects literature and spends all efforts drilling the rules of grammar. . . . This is theological bookkeeping." Ibid., The writer's translation.

[1] Ibid., p. 220.

The whole is certainly Koehler's best exegetical work.

This study, however, since it is primarily concerned with J. P. Koehler and the Wauwatosa Theology in the context of Midwestern American Lutheranism in the period from roughly 1880 to 1925, and as a criticism of the dominant methodology of this Lutheranism, is especially concerned with Wauwatosa's exegetical-historical methodology and its attempt to reorient the approach of confessional Lutheranism here.

J. P. Koehler looked out on his American Lutheran scene and was discouraged, to say the least. The Election Controversy of the 1880's, left a lasting impression on him of futility since he felt that even what theological gains as were made were not followed up. This merely personified the fact that "Here in America we have come to the end of our doctrinal discussion."[1] And what, in a sense, made the situation even more discouraging was the fact that he believed that the basic faith and intention (the "heart") of this Lutheranism was sound, but it was held in ball and chain by a method that could not adequately express its faith nor make for any kind of unity. In Koehler's view then, and in his context, he was certainly correct, dogmatics made for disunity. Not only did it make for disunity, but it was a short cut and as such needed to be replaced by a more adequate tool that would transcend the level of grammar and syntax.

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[1] "Art and Dogmatics," Faith-Life, IV (June, 1931), p. 10.

> After decadent Pietism together with the equally decadent Orthodoxism had ended up in Rationalism, the reawakening of faith in the nineteenth century quite naturally was accompanied by a return to the Bible-believing body of the seventeenth century dogmatics, as a short cut that exegesis with its new linguistic and historical apparatus could not offer.[1]

That Koehler's sympathies were with the Old Lutheran tradition and the subsequent confessional orthodoxy of the Midwestern Lutheran synods here in America has already been pointed out, and runs as a major theme through all his comments on Lutheranism in America. At the same time it was all an oversimplification and thus inadequate. In this simplitism Koehler sees the fatal flaw in the particular form of orthodoxy that triumphed here, but sees a hope for escape in the cultivation of the historical-exegetical method.[2] One of Koehler's better analyses of the American

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[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," Ibid., XIV (May, 1941), p. 10.

[2] For what is probably his best statement of the place of historical studies, see his "Die Bedeutung der Historischen Dissiplinen fuer die Amerikanisch Lutherische Kirche der Gegenwart," Theologische Quartalschrift, I (October, 1904), pp. 205-218. In the same volume he began his study of hermeneutics and exegesis as methods, in his "Zur Analogie des Glaubens." Thus at almost the outset of his theological professorship and in the first volume of the Quartalschrift the emphasis that was to characterize the Wauwatosa Theology was articulated.

Lutheran problem is contained in his "Die Synodalkonferenz in der Geschichte der Amerikanisch-Lutherschen Kirche."[1] For purposes of illustration several quotations from other writings of Koehler can best serve to summarize both his criticism of the effects of the dogmatic tradition on American Lutheranism and his conviction that a reorientation might be possible through the cultivation of the historical-exegetical approach.

> With the Old Lutherans of the nineteenth century it was different. Its sources were the seventeenth century fathers of Lutheran dogmatics and the confessional writings, and the struggle was directed against the Prussian Union (whole supporters, surely), were not without faith and Christian knowledge). In going back to those secondary sources, the Old Lutherans not only took over the forms of organization and worship, but also the intellectualism which was just as much the mentality of the nineteenth as the two preceding centuries. Whatever obtained in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was considered the Lutheran idea and reintroduced. This was not always prompted by the lack of discrimination of this Romantic period and by dogmatic ideas . . . . So there was no one in those days . . .to pose the question whether or not the forms of the seventeenth century were suited to the nineteenth century. This question and its correct answer were imperative. . . . A further important question, of course, would have

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[1] *Ibid.*, XIX (July, 1922), pp. 161-181. The article translated by Paul Hensel, appeared under the title "The Synodical Conference in the History of the Lutheran Church in America," in *Faith-Life*, XXIX (May, 1956), pp. 1-9.

> been whether these forms even in the seventeenth century were an adequate expression of the great truths of the Gospel.[1]
>
> Daher haben wir im 19. Jahrhundert eine rueckläeufige Bewegung in der Kirche, die nicht, wie Luther, mit der Schrift anfaengt, sondern mit den Schriften der Vaeter, die nicht die Exegese in Bewegung setzt, wie die Reformation im 16. Jahrhundert, soncern die Dogmatik des 17. Jahrhunderts.[2]

The results of all this were brought over to America, where the method peculiarly fitted the American circumstances and the need for self-identity, and had a heyday. And even Walther, in Koehler's estimation the greatest gift to the Lutheran Church in America, although he had the right thing in mind and wanted to establish a thoroughly sound and evangelical Lutheranism here, was handicapped by his undue reliance on the dogmatic tradition and passed this on to his students.[3]

> Walther's hobby, the Latin disputation, . . . was an antiquated scholasticism, and

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[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," Ibid., XII (November, 1939), p. 11.

[2] "Die Bedeutung der Historischen Dissiplinen fuer die Amerikanische Lutherische Kirche," Theologische Quartalschrift, I (October, 1904), p. 209.

[3] "History of the Wisconsin Synod, " Faith-Life, XIV (May, 1941), p. 9.

> besides, kept the whole study of theology still more in subjection to the seventeenth century theologians of the Lutheran Church.[1]
>
> The drawback in the discussion of Election, as in all the discussions, was the general dogmatical approach to the problem on all sides. That spelled falling back on the Lutheran dogmatics, whom Walther's own theological method had invested with undue authority. That was an obvious development too. . . . At the 1884 Synodical Conference convention, Walther read a paper showing how condemnable it is to base matters of faith on the writings of the fathers and to bind the consciences to their doctrinal decisions. But even this wisdom. . .remained just a dogma in the life of the church. Then, too, the battles of this period were fought in the ponderous methodology of the seventeenth century. This was in keeping with the reactionary nature of the German Romantic movement, in the course of which work in theology was resumed where Loescher's doctrinal presentations had broken off. Thus the trumpet blast of these fighting factions gave forth a very harsh polemical-dogmatical tone so that the controversy could not come to a satisfactory conclusion. . . . At the same time all kinds of seeds were sown for later dissension.[2]

Finally, the tradition so crippled theology that not even the simplest problems could be brought to an adequate solution. And it meant, too, that the Christian gospel itself became off-center and legalistic..

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[1] Ibid.

[2] "Die Synodalkonferenz in der Geschichte der Amerikanisch-Lutherischen Kirche," Theologische Quartalschrift, XIX (July, 1922), p. 165. The writer's translation.

> The Gospel is a message. . . . It is not a doctrine, but a message to those in dire distress. But it becomes a doctrine in the course of the church's history; even the second generation is apt to take this academic view, to the extent that the sense of need has faded. . . . For anyone to use his reason is surely meet and right. . . . Man's reason or intellect conveys the facts, organizes, reflects upon them, etc. But it happens in the course of time that the functioning of the mind is vitiated by being cut off from the deeper things of the spirit. . . . At this state (when it has become a matter of academic concern and training) the glad tidings. . .is made a party doctrine. Usually, it is some special point of the Bible's teaching that is singled out, and the more a one-sided discussion of it proceeds, divorced from the great Gospel message of the Scriptures, the more it becomes a party program.[1]

The process described above leads to what Koehler refers to as materialism in the Church and manifests itself in various ways, all of which operated also in the American church life.

> Everything is materialized. First the doctrine. This is reduced to theses and dogmas. . . . The theses and dogmas, as it were, become tangible, material objects. Even when they are abstractions (which are generally thought to belong to the realm of the pure

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[1] *Ibid*., XI (February, 1938), pp. 7-8.

> spirit) this materializing process is going on. For these abstractions in the state of intellectualism. . .are mechanical performances, and the general concepts involved are not the realities that all forms of scholasticism like to think them, but they become shells, forms without content, letters without spirit. That is materialism.
>
> The process does not end with the materialism of the doctrinal forms; the content, too, is finally affected. The real objects of faith, those things to which faith attaches itself, God's deeds of salvation. . .are shelved and matters which more or less engage the perception of our sense are dwelt on, to wit: the mathematics of the Trinity, the physiology of the two natures of Christ. . .the juridical or the physical form of justification. . . . Little wonder that the whole life of the church then becomes materialistic, even where the pure doctrine still has a foothold. Confessional or unionistic factionalism in place of ecumenicity . . . . With those who profess the Gospel and pure doctrine and at the same time are involved in all the fallacies indicated above, materialism is an insidious disease that saps the life of the Gospel, reduces the pure doctrine to cant, and what is more serious, is a sign of judgment.
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> The Christian who would understand the history of the church must give his attention to these matters. . . . It won't do for a Christian to withdraw himself, satisfied with his personal faith, and let the world go by with the dictum that the world has entered the church, or that the church has become worldly minded, without pondering how this has come about. Whoever strikes that pose, has failed to recognize his calling. . .does not understand his environment and least of all himself and his own part in the judgment.[1]

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[1] _Ibid_., p. 8.

Proper historical study, coupled with a cultivation of genuine exegesis, could lead to a more profound conception of theology, an understanding of the content under the form, and make possible also a profitable and healthy dogmatics. Then, too, might be avoided the two extremes which Koehler found prevalent in the American Lutheran Church of his day. Among his fellow German Lutherans of the Midwestern synods he found a tendency toward a complacent orthodoxy that was cocksure of its purity, an orthodoxy which Koehler found almost impossible to shock "out of its coma of orthodoxy infallibility."[1] This was especially true of the Missouri and Ohio Synods. Among the Eastern Lutherans, especially those from the General Synod background, he found assimilationsim and reductionism, and a so-called "openness" that often meant pure indifference to theology.

> All learning in the world is essentially a historical study, also theology. . . . Every other field of knowledge must receive its material from history; that is, the historical point of view. . . . In opposition often to this are the systematic disciplines; in secular sciences, philosophy; in theology, dogmatics. If philosophy attempts to create something positive which can conclusively settle the account of the past and give direction to future action in an absolute sense, it goes beyond its knowledge or ability. The same applies to the work

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[1] *Ibid.*, XV (November, 1942), p. 16.

> of dogmatics. The proper task of dogmatics has been treated correctly in theory in Lutheranism but not in practice. Theoretically, dogmatics should organize the material which has been gained in the history of the church through its historical-exegetical study. It should both cleanse theology from the rubbish of false and obsolete ideas and retain an open mind. . . .
>
> This is important. Cocksureness which has everything all figured out and has thus settled all issues, is not the conviction of faith, neither in its method nor its reliability. It is selfish and loveless in its subjective assureness, and lacks, at the same time, inner moral stability, and thus collapses in the face of an unexpected assault. Real conviction of faith, on the other hand, is a firm conviction which is built and grounded in a peculiar message of God's grace. This faith is coupled with a humble knowledge of its own insufficiency both in perception and comprehension. Confessional firmness is not to be minimized, but if it is motivated by faith it is at the same time open to discussion with other believing Christians. To a certain kind of logical temperament this combination of firmness and openness is paradoxical. Of course, it is paradoxical, but then all of life is a paradox, our Christian life itself because of the duality of our total existence under sin and grace.[1]

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[1] Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte, pp. vi-vii. The writer's translation. In keeping with Koehler's attitude he more often speaks of die klare Kehre than die reine Lehre as did the Missourians. Implicit in his point of view was a challenge to a leading presupposition of orthodoxy, the idea that an absolute purity of doctrine is possible. For Koehler the Word is absolute; all else is relative, including certainly our understanding and formulation of it. See, his "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XVII (January, 1944), p. 1.

Chapter IV

THE LEGACY OF LUTHERAN ORTHODOXY IN MIDWESTERN AMERICAN LUTHERANISM AND THE *CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS* OF FRANZ PIEPER

It has already been pointed out that the *Wauwatosa Theology* is of significance primarily within the particular historical situation of Midwestern American Lutheranism in the latter nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. *Wauwatosa*, whatever else it was and whatever were its limitations, was at least an attempt to be what every theology must try to be, relevant to its historical context. And since a study of the *Wauwatosa Theology* is basically a study of J. P. Koehler, the point can hardly be overemphasized that he can be appreciated as a significant figure only within that same context. This does not mean that he contributed nothing of value aside from that context. His *Lehrbuch*, for instance, even with its need for thorough revision, remains a significant and valuable interpretation of church history.[1]

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[1] In October, 1957, Professor J. Pelikan told the writer that the *Lehrbuch* remained a "fantastically keen" interpretation of both evangelicalism and legalism at work in the life of the Church. He said also that he highly recommended it to those of his University of Chicago students who could read the German.

It does, however, remain true that Koehler is best studied in the framework of Midwestern Lutheranism from roughly 1890 (the aftermath of the Election Controversy) to the First World War. After that date the environment was forcing subtle but basic changes on American Lutheranism, while Koehler himself contributed little that was new. That is, although some of Koehler's best work was done after 1918 (as his study of the Wisconsin Synod), mostly he was refining, amplifying, bringing to application, or simply repeating what he had come to earlier.[1] Of theological developments after 1918, he was largely unaware. To the end of his life he lived in the theological world of the Midwestern synods of the earlier period. He must then be studied as a German-American Lutheran from the tradition of Old Lutheranism, as that found its expression in America in the period noted. The same is true of the Wauwatosa Theology.

Like Franz Pieper, his very different contemporary, Koehler's interests and points of reference were determined by an earlier period. Both bore the scars of the doctrinal controversies of the nineteenth century, and both can best be seen as commentators on and reactions to the particular form of Lutheranism involved in those controversies. The controversies and subsequent divisions caused Franz Pieper to defend even more tenaciously than his predecessor, C. F. W. Walther, a "repristination" theology.[1] What came home to J. P. Koehler, on the other hand, was the futility of a tradition which in ball-and-chain manner "has hindered the emancipation from the type of dogmatics that kept the synods, called to the building of the Lutheran Church here, embroiled in constant mutual strife and opposition."[2] Nothing that he could see in the nineteenth century pointed to any way out of the theological impasse, and although Walther had had a glorious vision and the right thing in mind, "unhappily his sponsoring of it here served to give undue prestige to the old dogmaticians."[3] The legacy of orthodox Lutheran dogmatics, in America even less historically conscious and even more simplistic than among the Old Lutherans in Germany[1], made for a tradition that although simple, neat, and structured, at the same time effectively made impossible the way to unity or self-criticism, since, among other things, "it causes us always in controversy to be on the defensive for the fathers and to contend with all sorts of unnecessary wrangling instead of going boldly into Scripture itself."[2]

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[1] His "Gegenstand, Methode und Bedeutung des Theologischen Geschichstudium," Theologische Quartalschrift, XXV (January, 1925), pp. 1-25, is, for example, a much inferior repetition of his 1904 essay, "Die Bedeutung der Historischen Dissiplinen fuer die Amerikanisch Lutherische Kirche der Gegenwart," Ibid., I (October, 1904), pp. 205-218.

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[1] For Pieper's thoroughgoing defense of the methodology of the old Lutheran dogmaticians, see the first volume of his Christian Dogmatics, especially pp. 149-186. If our subject were Franz Pieper the writer would, however, argue that Pieper was less "repristination" than he thought he was, and considerably more nineteenth century American.

[2] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XVI (December, 1943), p. 10.

[3] Ibid.

Any assessment then of Koehler and the Wauwatosa Theology and any appreciation of what was meant by the call to reorientation must be seen in the context of the legacy of Lutheran orthodoxy in its Americanized version.[3] The legacy was, in turn, personified in the theology of Franz Pieper, and its practical expression on the level of the empirical life of the church in John Fritz' Pastoral Theology (St. Louis: Concordia, 1932). What both Pieper and Fritz give expression to is by no means to be regarded as confined to the Missouri Synod. It is true that one might argue against the view that Franz Pieper really does personify Midwestern American Lutheranism, or that Missourian orthodoxy should be taken as illustrative of Ohio or Iowa. However, aside from the fact that J. P. Koehler at least believed this to be true so that we have to realize that in his criticism he always regarded the Iowa, Buffalo, Ohio, and Missouri Synods as identical in theological approach,[1] a survey of the texts used at the non-Missourian seminaries would bear out Koehler's generalization. Certainly there is nothing in the polemics that went with and followed the Election Controversy to indicate that Ohio, for instance, was in any sense less scholastic or less defensive of the fathers, or more historically oriented, or exegetically more competent than Missouri. Koehler was probably too hard on the Iowa Synod in this respect, and had he been better acquainted with Johann Michael Reu, he would have to have modified his somewhat indiscriminate lumping of Ohio, Missouri, Buffalo, and Iowa, and the orthodox Norwegians together methodologically,[1] as though there were no differences in approach among them. The generalization was, except for Ohio and Missouri, somewhat too neat.[2]

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[1] See, for instance, the estrangement that took place between C. F. W. Walther and Franz Delitzsch. The latter, in spite of his high orthodoxy, took too seriously for Walther, the discoveries of Biblical criticism. Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, pp. 178-179.

[2] "The Analogy of Faith," Faith-Life, XXV (May, 1952), p. 13. All references to Koehler's very important "Zur Analogie des Glaubens," which began as a series in the very first issue of the Quartalschrift (January, 1904), will henceforth be to E. E. Sauer's excellent translation of it as it appeared in Faith-Life, XXXIV, XXV (October-December, 1951, January-May, 1952).

[3] The first volume of the Quartalschrift, with Koehler's "Zur Analogie des Glaubens" and his "Die Bedeutung der Historischen Dissiplinen" constituted precisely such a call to reorientation, and a historical-exegetical platform on which the Wauwatosa Theology was to stand for the next 20 years. These two articles together with his "Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns," Ibid., XI, XII (October, 1914, January, April, July, 1915), constituted a clear statement of Koehler's essential viewpoints both theoretically and practically.

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[1] "Thus there were the four synods here, Buffalo, Missouri, Ohio, and Iowa, that considered themselves especially orthodox." "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XVI (November, 1943) p. 10.

Basically,however, there can be no doubt but that Koehler was correct in his assessment. The Missouri Synod did personify the legacy. It was only more successful than the other synods in making this orthodoxy work. The theological presuppositions of the Ohioans, of the Hoenecke disciples in the Wisconsin Synod, of the Iowans and of the Norwegian Synod, and even of those Norwegians of somewhat broad-church tendencies who made up the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood of the

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[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XIV (November, 1943), p. 9.

[2] As an example of an historical-exegetical awareness that would have pleased Koehler and certainly caused him to modify his negative opinion of Iowa's tendencies, see J. M. Reu's In the Interest of Lutheran Unity (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1940). It is true that this was written after the period under discussion, but when it is also realized that Reu had taught at the Iowa Synod's Wartburg Seminary since 1899, and that he became in his old age, not less, but in fact more orthodox, then this example is quite telling. This is not, however, to say that the Iowa Synod reflected in the problems under discussion, Reu's lead or even that Reu himself was sufficiently emancipated from the scholasticism that tended to accompany conservative, confessional Lutheranism in America.

1880's and 1890's[1] were not much different. That none of the other groups, Ohio possibly excepted, managed to achieve the tight ship that Missouri did nor the remarkable esprit de corps that accompanied this orthodoxy in the Missouri Synod, is almost certainly due to other than theological factors. For instance, Missouri somehow had the genius to modify at some crucial points and at the same time create a high popular loyalty to what must appear to the outsider as an amazingly rigid position. But, at any rate, the whole story of why orthodoxy was successful in one group and not in another (as among the Norwegians), why the particular modifications took place that did take place (as on church polity), how a supposedly foreign and outdated theological system could adjust so well to the currents of nineteenth century America, all these, and a number of other questions, are beyond the resources available to this study. The questions are, however, very important and the recognition of them might well go toward a beginning at a more profound view of American Lutheran church history. How, for instance, did the time and context determine the character of the

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[1] E. Clifford Nelson's sympathies are not with "repristination theology." However, in spite of his strong sympathy for the Anti-Missourians among the Norwegians, he nevertheless states that they, too, were in the same stream. See Nelson and Fevold, II, pp. 285-287.

Lutheranism under question? J. P. Koehler was convinced that what emerged in the way of orthodox Lutheran theology and its particular form here were in fact successful (but not necessarily sound) responses to what the American environment called for.[1] He was convinced, too, that the whole was a simplistic short cut.[2] Even the schismatic tendencies of this Lutheran orthodoxy represented an Americanization of sorts.[3] And for Koehler the type of theology represented by Franz Pieper spoke for the whole of what he meant by Midwestern American Lutheranism. What separated the synodical groups and what caused them to war so bitterly was most certainly not any basic methodological difference, but only separate doctrines on which they differed. What Karl Koehler said in 1936 upon the death of R. C. H. Lenski (of the old Ohio Synod) reflected the exact point of view of his father.

> With Dr. Lenski there has passed another of the old warhorses (*Sit venia verbo!*) of the

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[1] See, for instance, his discussion of Adolph Hoenecke, "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XIII (March, 1940), p.12.

[2] *Ibid.*, XIV (May, 1941), p. 10.

[3] "Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns," translated from the *Theologische Quartalschrift*, by Alex Hillmer, *Faith-Life*, XXVI (January, 1953), p. 12.

> Midwestern Lutheran strife. . .of the previous century. A recent biography of the late Dr. Bente of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, recalls the period to us, and likewise the fact that these two men in opposing camps had much in common. . . , both ardent defenders of their synod's doctrine and zealous polemicists; both of the same bent of mind and theological make-up. In general it may be said of that strife: it was so protracted because it was carried on between men of the same school of thought, theological cousins even after the synodical brotherhood had been severed.[1]

In spite of the fact that Koehler did perhaps exaggerate the extent to which the orthodox synods were identical, even a brief survey of what were used as the bases of theological instruction at the seminaries of the several synods would bear out his basic contention. A survey of the theological literature of the various synods, and especially the polemical writings, would substantiate the same point.[2] In no way did the Election Controversy, which should have, lead to reorientation. Each of the groups, in spite of certain variations, continued in the grand tradition of Lutheran orthodoxy. In all the synods concerned a theology of "repristination" reigned.

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[1] Faith-Life, IX (November, 1936), p. 12. The severance of synodical brotherhood refers specifically here to the Ohio and Missouri Synods, though that had happened also between the Missourians and a large bulk of the Norwegians. The Iowa Synod never was in official fellowship with the Missouri or Wisconsin Synods. After 1930, Iowa and Ohio, together with the small Buffalo Synod, merged to form the American Lutheran Church. In regard to the original separation referred to above, Koehler always felt that attempts to overcome the schism were doomed precisely because the various groups could not overcome the common methodology that originally had helped to cause the controversies. His "Analogy of Faith" was above all an attempt to overcome the bad effects of this methodological tradition.

[2] The issue would become clearest in an examination of the voluminous literature on the Election Controversy. Especially

The "repristination" character of Franz Pieper's Christian Dogmatics and of Adolph Hoenecke's Evangelische-Lutherische Dogmatik is clear. The same theological character dominates the other widely-used text of dogmatics, Heinrich Schmid's Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, which is not so much a text "as it is a compilation of theological statements drawn from the writings of fourteen prominent Lutheran theologians who lived during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the attempt to exhibit the teaching that had been current up to the time of Rationalism."[1] Even Henry E. Jacobs' Summary of the Christian Faith (Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1905), although

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illuminating of the tendency to prove one's case by quoting from the fathers is the volume edited by George Schodde under the polemical title, The Error of Modern Missouri: Its Inception, Development, and Refutation (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1897). The whole constitutes an excellent introduction to the methodology of the period as well as to the particular controversy.

[1] Reprint edition of the third English edition [1899] , (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961), p. 3.

somewhat less pointed in its orthodoxy, is really only a restatement in catechetical form of the theology of Lutheran orthodoxy.[1] Because the Jacobs text was less doctrinaire and more flexible (but fully as abstract) it might have, had it been more widely used in the Midwestern synods, led to some modification of the prevailing rigidity. At the same time Jacobs was a defense of the tradition of the great dogmaticians.[2] Elling Hove's Christian Doctrine, which represented what had been taught among the Norwegians, was simply an inferior and overly-condensed version of the theology of Franz Pieper.

It may well be that the hold of Lutheran orthodoxy was not as firm on the Midwestern Synods that stood in doctrinal conflict with the Missouri Synod as it was on the Missouri Synod. If this was so it is also the writer's impression that this was an accident or due, as among the Norwegians, to the somewhat persuasive influence of the pietistic tradition. It is also true that Schmid's text because it is a historical compilation and relatively unpolemical as well as concise, could be used less to dominate a theological environment and more to present in summary form one approach to Lutheran theology. There is nothing, however, which the writer knows of to indicate that any such historical awareness existed in the synods of America. On the contrary, just the fact that in Missouri (also in the days when Walther used Baier[1]), dogmatics was always presented in direct connection with contemporary issues may well have meant that Missouri's orthodoxy was actually less formalistic. Whatever else might be said of C. F. W. Walther, he was not formalistic. That is, he was never defending an abstract system apart from the empirical life of the church as he lived it. Always he was dealing with what to him were live issues. This is manifestly true, for instance, of his famous Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel.[2] Here the theology of Lutheran orthodoxy applied to pastoral work is no formalistic abstraction, but is presented with warmth and evangelical fervor. The same lack of formalism is apparent elsewhere, as in Walther's defense of the dogmaticians and of Missouri's way of doing theology in his foreword to Lehre und Wehre of 1862.[1] Because this was true, J. P. Koehler always defended the intentions of Missouri and, in fact, believed Walther to be less damaged by loyalty to a system and methodology than many of his apparently less rigid contemporaries.[2]

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[1] Franz Pieper, however, while granting that Jacobs means to be orthodox, attacks his dogmatics for being weak on Verbal Inspiration and for being in general less than "strictly confessional." Christian Dogmatics, I, pp. 180-181.

[2] Jacobs, p. vii.

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[1] For a student's account of how Baier was used, see "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XIV (May, 1941), p. 7. Although Baier's text was something of an abstraction, Walther's elaborate and extensive elucidations were concrete and contemporary.

[2] St. Louis: Concordia, 1929. Translated by W. H. Dau from the German edition of 1897, which consisted of 39 evening lectures given to the students of Concordia Seminary.

Koehler's main contention, that everywhere in the Midwestern orthodox synods the seventeenth century dogmatics represented the pattern of theology, is obviously correct, at least insofar as the formal study of dogmatics was concerned.[3]

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[1] Translated by William Arndt and printed in Concordia Theological Monthly, XXVI (December, 1955), pp. 893-912.

[2] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XIV (May, 1941), p. 7. Koehler was always amazed that Walther managed to break with the Intuitu Fidei formula of the dogmaticians, which even Missouri's opponents later came to admit was a "human construction." See the 1938 "Declaration of the Representatives of the American Lutheran Church," in Reu's In the Interest of Lutheran Unity, p. 7-8.

[3] Catalogs have been examined covering the years from 1890 to 1930, from Capital Seminary of the Ohio Synod, Columbus, Ohio; Wartburg Seminary of the Iowa Synod, Dubuque, Iowa; the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, of the Wisconsin Synod, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin; both the Concordia Seminaries of the Missouri Synod at Springfield, Illinois, and St. Louis, Missouri; Luther Seminary of the Norwegian Synod, St. Paul, Minnesota; the Seminary of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minnesota (both the last two up to 1917, when they merged); and Luther Theological Seminary of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, St. Paul, Minnesota, after its organization in 1917.

At Capital Seminary, Columbus, Ohio, of the Ohio Synod, orthodoxy of the "repristination" type was self-consciously cultivated. In language which is remarkably similar to that of Missouri, Ohio pledged itself to "pure" Lutheranism.

> Its rapidly expanding field induced the synod in 1830,to establish an institution for the education of our ministry. . .from whence as from a fountainhead the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession of Faith might be promulgated literally, purely, and unadulteratedly. . . and where the characteristics of Lutheranism, which neither malice nor art can destroy, nor time efface, might be presented.[1]

The form in which this unadulterated Lutheranism was promulgated was by means of the English edition of Schmid's Doctrinal Theology. This was used at least up to 1918, and the whole curriculum at Capital Seminary focused heavily on dogmatics, symbolics, and catechetics. In the latter field the text used at Columbus, as well as at the other seminaries examined, was Johann Conrad Dietrich's highly scholastic explanation in question and answer form of Luther's Small Catechism.[2] E. W. Stellhorn, from 1881 to 1919, the leading theologian of the Ohio Synod, had been J. P. Koehler's teacher at Northwestern College. Koehler characterized him as being pre-eminently a logician who just as he taught Latin literature with concentration on form and syntax approached theology likewise.[1]

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[1] Capital University, Columbus, Ohio. Catalog, 1930-1931, pp. 181-182.

[2] Originally published in the seventeenth century and widely used in the Old Lutheran revival of the nineteenth century, it was available in editions in Latin, German, Norwegian, and English, the latter translated and published by Concordia Publishing House in 1896.

The situation within the Iowa Synod was likewise in the same tradition. During the time between 1890 and 1930, three men taught dogmatics at Wartburg Seminary. Two of them, George Zeilinger (1907-1930) and Sigmund Fritschel (1890-1900), used Schmid, and apparently represented no variation on the scholastic theme. The third man, Johann Michael Reu (1899-1943), did, of course, represent a variation, and certainly was critical of any method that would present the Christian faith as an abstract system of doctrine.

> Our Christian faith, however, is based upon sacred history, and this sacred history is nothing less than the self-disclosure of the God who is the very sum and substance of the faith we confess in the Catechism.[2]

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[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XIII (October, 1940), p. 10.

[2] Reu, Lutheran Faith and Life, (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1935), p.

The Iowa Synod also liked to think of itself as representing an "exegetical tendency" as over against Missouri's or Ohio's "dogmatical tendency."[1] Iowa, for instance, held it proper to begin with exegesis and then proceed to the confessions, while Missouri ~~objected~~ to this and "had declared in an official letter: 'Lutherans as such must not interpret the confessions in the light of the Bible, but must interpret the Bible according to the confessions.'"[2] Then, too, Iowa was somewhat given to "open questions" and Reu himself for a long time had difficulty with the Ohio-Missouri view of the inerrancy of Scripture. In spite of all this, however, an examination of Reu's lectures in dogmatics, as preserved in the Reu Memorial Library at Wartburg Seminary, bears out the thesis that he too remained basically in the seventeenth century tradition insofar as he taught dogmatics. So much is this true that Professor Julius Boden~~sieck~~, a student, colleague, and admirer of Reu, says even of him that he "represented ultra-orthodox Lutheranism."[3]

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[1] Neve, Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America, 2nd ed., p. 285.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Interestingly, Reu became progressively more conservative and by the 1930's, had come around to the Ohio-Missouri position and admitted his former weakness. See his "What Is Scripture?" in his In the Interest of Lutheran Unity, p. 72. Verbal Inspiration is here defended, but the whole treatment remains quite different from that, for instance, of Pieper. Scripture remains primarily for Reu a "history of salvation." Ibid., p. 52.

At the Norwegian Seminaries the same pattern prevailed as elsewhere. At the Seminary of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church, Schmid was used, while at the Norwegian Synod's Luther Seminary, Walther's student, Elling Hove, taught. After the merger of the two institutions in 1917, Hove continued as professor of dogmatics at Luther Theological Seminary until his death in 1927.

There were, to be sure, a number of Lutheran dogmatical works in the English language that did not precisely fit the tradition of Old Lutheranism. Most significant, perhaps, were Milton Valentine's two-volumed Christian Theology (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1905-1907), Andrew Voight's Biblical Dogmatics (Columbus, South Carolina: Press of the Lutheran Board of Publication, 1917), and Revere Weidner's Introduction to Dogmatic Theology (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana, 1888). Both Weidner and Voight were certainly conservative Lutherans, but neither was strictly confessional as the Missourians or Ohioans used that term. Voight, for instance, says that "Confessionalism does not mean that it is the office of dogmatics simply to reproduce and defend the accepted doctrine of the church."[1] Valentine, on the other hand, stood substantially in quite a different theological tradition. But, at any rate, none of these men had any great influence on the synods included within Koehler's definition of Midwestern American Lutheranism.

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[1] Biblical Dogmatics, p. xviii. For an attack on both Weidner and Voight at this point, see Pieper's Christian Dogmatics, I, p. 182.

What J. P. Koehler in all his comments on the methodology of American Lutheran orthodoxy saw as the fatal flaw in the tradition comes out most clearly in the Christian Dogmatics of Franz Pieper. The Christian Dogmatics, precisely because it does constitute a running polemic and because Pieper never hesitated to state clearly the position of his tradition is an excellent means to get at the inner life of this theology. The lack of historical consciousness, the atomistic and wooden Biblicism, the dependence on the fathers, the pervasive simplitism, and the naive unawareness of presuppositions, as well as the air of infallibility that tended to accompany orthodoxy of this sort all are apparent in Pieper. And it becomes obvious, too, that within this context the Wauwatosa Theology really was a call to reorientation, especially when it is realized that the Wauwatosa men were basically in doctrinal agreement with the theology they criticized.

In spite of the fact that one would not want to insist that Pieper precisely personifies the theology of the other synods, nor insist that every dogmatician in his tradition was as tactless, careless, or plain clumsy in his statement of orthodoxy, yet if one takes seriously at all the content of the vast polemical literature of the several synods, Pieper is at least sufficiently typical to constitute a sound case study. And, perhaps even more important, the Wauwatosa Theology as an expression of movement within the Wisconsin Synod was obviously, by virtue of the fact that Wisconsin was officially in pulpit and altar fellowship with the Missouri Synod (as none of the other synods was after the 1880's, except ambiguously, the old Norwegian Synod[1]), most acquainted with and most concerned with the group for which Pieper spoke, a group, too, which by any sound analysis had a profound influence on the whole of American Lutheranism.

We deliberately then use Pieper's Christian Dogmatics as the single best means of getting at the methodology of which Wauwatosa was a criticism. And the fact that Pieper's work was first published in 1917, is irrelevant to the issue.[2] Pieper had taught at Concordia Seminary since 1878, and since the death of Walther in 1887, was the chief theological spokesman for the Missouri Synod. His *Christian Dogmatics* simply represented what he had taught in the classroom since the beginning of his career.[1]

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[1] For the ambiguous nature of this fellowship, see Grace for Grace, pp. 57-62. This fellowship ceased when the Norwegian Synod became in 1917 part of the newly organized Norwegian Lutheran Church of America.

[2] The three volumes of the German edition, Christliche Dogmatik (St. Louis, Concordia, 1917-1924), were put out in an official English edition from 1950 to 1953. All references in this work will be to the English edition except where the latter has omitted material from the original.

> In spite of the demand for an "undogmatic" Christianity, we declare: "Only dogmatics is edifying," namely, dogmatics as *doctrina divina* revealed in Scripture, the only doctrine which may be taught in Christ's Church. In the Christian Church, doctrine is the all important thing.[2]
>
> There can be no development of the Christian doctrine, because the Christian doctrine given to the Church by the Apostles is a finished product, complete and perfect, fixed for all times. It is not in need of improvement and allows no alteration.[3]

Franz Pieper, the brother of Wauwatosa's August Pieper, was, during the more than 50 years of his tenure at Concordia, the teacher of every student who graduated. This means that he taught over 80 per cent of Missouri Synod pastors during the time of his tenure. Even after his death, his text continued in use, and in its English edition remains the standard text at both the seminaries of the Missouri Synod. When one realizes that the Missouri Synod represents roughly one-third of American Lutheranism, Pieper's influence is obviously enormous. Add to this the fact that the approach to theology in most of the groups that make up the present American Lutheran Church[1] has been substantially identical to that of Pieper, he becomes even more representative. Then, too, what Koehler saw as a glaring weakness of this whole tradition, its tendency always to defend and even absolutize the fathers[2], comes out clearly in the attitude toward Pieper among his disciples.[3]

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[1] *Christian Dogmatics*, II, p. ix.

[2] *Ibid*., I, p. 101.

[3] *Ibid*., I, p. 129. Typically, Pieper makes no distinction between the givenness of Scripture and the Church's formulation of what the Scripture means in the sense of systematic theology. He condemns every concept of "doctrinal progress" and "progressive theology." *Ibid*., I, pp. 129-138.

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[1] Including, as it does, the former Iowa, Ohio, Buffalo, and Norwegian Synods.

[2] See Koehler's "Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns," Faith-Life, XXV (September, 1952), p. 11.

[3] Thus Ewald Plass can refer to Pieper's Christian Dogmatics as being "as irrefutable as Scripture itself." What Luther Says (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), III, p. 1934. The "irrefutable" remark implies that something can be true of a man's historical attempt at a systematic theology which from a Biblical point of view can never be asserted of any human achievement. Pieper's own doctrine of sin, if consistently applied, would insist that at no point is a man free of the limitations which sin imposes. Nevertheless, the statement of Plass represents a typical response of a "pure doctrine" advocate to the work of a dogmatician whom he follows. As an example of the same veneration applied to Walther, see Theodore Engelder's Walther and the Church (St. Louis: Concordia, 1938). There W. H. T. Dau in his "Appraisal" of Walther (pp.

The whole problem why the type of theology represented by Pieper came to dominate, as it obviously did, Midwestern American Lutheranism remains a problem that needs more study. Certainly it will not do to assume (as Pieper did) that the character and theology which became dominant in the Missouri Synod were to be explained purely in terms of a reawakening of the Christian faith as though a live faith would necessarily and naturally result in a theology identical to his. Nor, obviously, can "cultural lag" explain the triumph since a theory simply does not fit the facts except in a very superficial sense. A more adequate explanation, as indicated before, probably lies in the conviction that American Lutheranism had to come to grips with a problem for which it had little equipment. In the determination to establish a true Lutheranism in America, the highly articulate orthodoxy of

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1-9) says, "It hurt Walther when during a public discussion a speaker remarked: 'When Walther has spoken, there is no use of anyone else's speaking'. . . . In itself it was true. Walther traveled somewhat alone on his high plane. He had many devoted followers, many sincere admirers, but he had no equal. In a whole sierra of Lutheran confessions, he stands out like a Mount Whitney or Mount Shasta." Ibid., pp. 6-7. Implicit in all this was not only an extravagant veneration for a man but also a belief that an absolute purity of doctrine is possible. Orthodoxy, according to Koehler, tends to operate as though only the will and not the intellect is corrupted by sin. This results in a strange version of a Donatism of doctrine, i.e., a doctrinally "pure" church. For Koehler the Word is absolute, all else is relative including one's understanding of the Word which is always conditioned by time and place. "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XVII (January, 1944), p. 1.

the seventeenth century could provide ready-made answers. Thus, in what was in a sense not a sign of "cultural lag" but of creative borrowing, this orthodox theology was applied to the American scene and in the very process served to mold a whole new form of Lutheranism.[1]

While Pieper was a voluminous writer, we will concentrate exclusively on his Christian Dogmatics and pay special attention to the first volume where he discusses the nature and character of theology, the doctrine of the Word, and subscription to the Lutheran confessions. The fact that we are especially interested in the method involved explains why relatively little emphasis will be put on the specific doctrinal formulations except where these help to clarify the subject of this study.

For purposes of getting more precisely at the methodology and presuppositions of the Christian Dogmatics and to point up the relevance of Wauwatosa's criticism of what this represented, we can organize the analysis of the text under three general themes:

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[1] That Lutheran orthodoxy was modified here has been pointed out. While other examples could be used, the church polity modification remains perhaps most obvious. Missouri's own doctrine of Church and Ministry was developed by Walther, really as an improvisation to meet the Stefhanite crisis, as see, Forster's Zion on the Mississippi. It was, however, a concept that influenced other Lutheran groups and was peculiarly "American." Thus we get the strong emphasis on congregationalism. The strong emphasis, too, on the invisible church as against the visible, while it had support in the dogmaticians, was reinforced and given a new form here. On matter of liturgy, church year, and the sacraments, American Lutheranism remained, compared to the other frontier groups, high-church. On Church and Ministry it became very low church

A. The metaphysical presuppositions.

B. The principles of Sola Scriptura and Verbal Inspiration and the hermeneutical methods attached to these.

C. The doctrinal and confessional presuppositions.

Any adequate treatment of the first of these themes would, of course, require a thorough examination of the relationship between theology and philosophy with special attention in Pieper's case to the whole Aristotelian influence as it came down through Catholic scholasticism, and the Lutheran orthodoxy of the seventeenth century, which Pieper attempted to reproduce for his time.[1] All that need be

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and thoroughly "American." This was especially true of Missouri and the Norwegians. For Walther's "transfer of office" theory and his congregationalism, as well as his emphasis on the purely "human" character of a synod (all read back into the New Testament) see Fritz' Pastoral Theology, pp. 24-59, 232-256; also, Christian Dogmatics, III, pp. 427-435.

[1] The scholasticism of Lutheran orthodoxy and its Aristotelian character is probably beyond any need to be established. It is noteworthy that even such a careful and sympathetic student of Lutheran orthodoxy as Robert Preus admits both the influences of philosophy and the fact that it was fraught with dangers. See The Inspiration of Scripture (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1955), pp. xv-xvi.

attempted here, however, is to indicate that Pieper was not as free from metaphysics and philosophy as he believed himself to be. The second theme, concerning the Word, and what this doctrine meant hermeneutically in the tradition of orthodoxy, is not difficult to get at, nor is it difficult to see Pieper's doctrinal presuppositions and what was involved in his subscription to the Book of Concord. The latter is implicit in the whole theological enterprise of Pieper. In Pieper the Confessions are absolutely absolutized. At any rate, it should become clear that Pieper's conviction that what he wrote was in no sense interpretation but merely the systematic arrangement of clear Scripture passages ("sedes doctrinae") with no presuppositions[1] is not only naive but also irritating to any student with even an elementary sophistication in the history of doctrine.

> The talk common in our day that all church bodies stand on Scripture and differ only in their interpretation of it is not in accordance with the facts. The Roman Catholic Church does not stand on Scripture, but on papal interpretation of Scripture. The Reformed Churches, as far as they differ from the Lutheran Church, do not stand on Scripture, but on Zwingli's, Calvin's, etc., interpretations of Scripture. The Lutheran Church, however, does not stand on an inter-

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[1] Christian Dogmatics, I, p. 141

> pretation of Scripture, but on Scripture itself. It can be proved by induction in the face of universal contradiction.[1]

What our examination should indicate is that Pieper does offer a comprehensive, coherent, logical, unambiguous, and easily learned system of Christian doctrine providing one grants certain premises essential to the structure. That is, if one shares his intellectual and metaphysical tradition, if one accepts *Verbal Inspiration* and, more importantly, accepts a certain way of applying this hermeneutically (a non-historical-exegetical way), and if one accepts ahead of time the body of Lutheran doctrine, the *Christian Dogmatics* could speak meaningfully to one. But all this also makes it obvious why Koehler and the *Wauwatosa Theology* did not believe that the way to unity could ever come through dogmatics.

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[1] *Ibid*., I, p. 367. Consistent with this Pieper, like Walther, could refer to the Lutheran Church as the "True Visible Church on Earth." Precisely what this meant (since it did not deny that other churches were also Christian) comes out best in Walther's essay, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church, the True Visible Church on Earth," in *Walther and the Church*, pp. 116-128. In keeping with all this, Koehler reports "An eminent student of Walther at one time made the statement at a Synodical Conference meeting--and one could sense that it was a commonly accepted idiom--that a person who dies in the faith as a member of a sectarian church actually dies as a Lutheran. . . . When it was pointed out [by Koehler] . . . that the concept of 'Communion of Saints' in generic, while 'Lutheran Church' is specific and historical, and that, therefore, the proper presentation should rather raise the lower concept into the higher one. . .and that one should rather say 'He who stands in the justifying faith as it is confessed by the Lutheran Church most certainly belongs to the Communion of Saints. . . . Some of his [Walther's]

A. The Metaphysical and Philosophical Presuppositions

Pieper's naivete in regard to his metaphysical tradition becomes especially damaging in connection with the way in which he interpreted the Sola Scriptura principle.[1] That is, Lutheran orthodoxy has maintained that what is distinctive about it is precisely the fact that it comes to Scripture with no philosophical presuppositions. The Word stands all alone. Koehler would reply, man is not a "tabula rasa"; he does have a doctrinal and intellectual tradition, he does have a world view and a way of looking at all reality, and the better part of wisdom is to be aware of this. Unless one knows this or until one's presuppositions become effectively

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students resented the criticism." "Die Kriegschuldluege und ihre Behandlung eine Warnung fuer die Kirche." Faith-Life, VIII (May, 1935), pp. 6-7. Translation by Albert Meier.

[1] Sola Scriptura originally in the Lutheran context meant, of course, only Scripture as authority for faith and life in contrast to Scripture and Tradition.

Pieper meant this but also something else by the term, Nuda Scriptura (Scripture with no interpretation), which is a psychological impossibility. See Christian Dogmatics, I, pp. 359-360.

challenged self-criticism will be lacking and one's interpretations will take on the character of doctrinal infallibility. Not only Scripture is "inspired" then but in effect also a specific theological formulation or even a particular man.[1]

Pieper's philosophical tradition is apparent both formally and materially. A few instances may serve to point up how this affects the content of his theology.

In his discussion of "Angeology"[2], the very language in which Pieper discusses the subject--"essence," "nature and property", "number and rank"--is thoroughly medieval and carries with it also the content of the scholastic metaphysic. The question, for instance, as to whether or not angels contract marriages with humans is discussed (and dismissed as "pure fiction," but not because the question is ludicrous but because no specific evidence is discovered), and, just as much to the scholastic point, angels are declared "illocal." They are at a definite place but since they are also immaterial they "occupy no space." In this respect they resemble human souls, for the soul, too, fills no space and yet is not outside a person's body but "in him."[1]

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[1] The danger was clearly felt by the Wauwatosa Theology. See, for instance, August Pieper's "Quo Propier Luthero, eo Melior Theologus," Theologische Quartalschrift, XIV (January, 1917), pp. 64-77.

[2] Christian Dogmatics, I, pp. 498-511.

The same tradition is apparent in the "Doctrine of Christ."[2] The way in which the subject is treated compares to the treatment in the Thomist tradition, where, of course, the use of philosophical equipment is admitted. This is not to say that what is said is necessarily wrong or that no valid issues are involved, but to insist that we do not meet here the simple word of Scripture merely arranged systematically. Philosophy of a certain kind is used to defend and articulate a certain Christology (the soundness of the latter is beside the point). The disturbing thing again is Pieper's unawareness of what he was doing. This becomes especially serious when one realizes that this scheme of Christology becomes absolutely identified with Scripture and must be accepted by another *in toto* before he can be considered orthodox.[3]

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[1] *Ibid*., I, p. 503.

[2] *Ibid*., II, pp. 55-394. In some sections the influence is less apparent than in others. But see the "Communication of Attributes," II, pp. 129-279.

[3] This is notan overstatement and helps to explain the impasse that developed at almost every point in the doctrinal controversies of American Lutheranism. The Biblical injunction "to speak the same things" (I Cor. 1:10) demands that "Christians are to use the same words in the same sense." *Ibid*., III, p. 426.

Pieper's anthropology, too, is distinctly influenced by a certain philosophical tradition. The extent to which a Greek body-soul dichotomy was taken over by scholasticism is now generally recognized, but Pieper was totally unaware of this.[1]

Man is composed of two distinct parts, body and soul (and Genesis 2:7 is made to fit this scheme). The existence of the soul itself is simply taken for granted and even when the question of traducianism versus creationism is raised, although this might well have led to a fundamental re-examination of the whole question, it does not. The dichotomy is, on the contrary, never questioned. This, in fact, is precisely stated in Schmid (and the statement illustrates the criticism raised here against the tradition of orthodoxy.)

> Finally, they [the dogmaticians] urge the agreement of the sounder philosophers, who prove that the immortality of the soul belongs to the number of those things which are προλήψεις (presuppositions), or "certain preconceived notions admitted by all.[2]

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[1] *Ibid*., I, pp. 515-577. Here a dualistic anthropology is implicit. For a more concrete illustration of this dualism, see "Eschatology", *Ibid*., III, pp. 507-515.

[2] *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, p. 631.

Here it becomes clear how the unquestioned presuppositions determined how Scripture would be read and what it could say. Thus if one begins with a dualistic anthropology and with a certain idea of the word "soul" (with a meaning, incidentally, that the Hebrew word "nephesh" emphatically does not have), then any passage where the word occurs is interpreted in a certain way regardless of the Biblical viewpoint toward man or the context. Passages from the Old Testament where historically no concept of the immortality of the soul could have been possible are read to assert such a view. Suddenly the Hebrews have a Greek view of man and so, too, a piece of philosophy directly influenced by non-Biblical concepts becomes a part of Christian theology.[1]

This same Greek philosophical tradition causes Pieper to raise and answer questions which are foreign to the Hebrew mind and thus to Scripture. This becomes apparent in the discussion of man before the Fall, where, among other things, the absence of sin is tied up with perfect rationality and knowledge.

Thus, in the Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States[1] the deduction is made that human nature in the state of integrity "had a truly scientific knowledge of nature."[2] In the Christian Dogmatics we read that "He [man] was not merely capable of culture, but was truly cultured, endowed not only with the gift of speech, but with an intelligence that, besides knowing God, had such a grasp of the natural sciences as is unattainable today, even by the most diligent study."[3] Again, "Man exercised dominion over the creatures. . . . It was a real dominion; willingly all creatures rendered man service."[4]

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[1] This is not to say that the whole Greek concept was taken over, but the Greek dualism. There is not found in Pieper or the dogmaticians theessential inviolability of the soul or the essential goodness of it even after the Fall, although John Gerhard came very close to it. See Schmid, p. 630.

Thus, the philosophical approach to knowledge, anthropology, and the implications of sin, leads to a strange kind of docetism in the doctrine of Christ, even when historic docetism is rejected. And it becomes a question, too, whether the use of the categories under the "Communication of Attributes" does not also encourage the tendency to describe a good deal more than a responsible theology has any right to describe.[1]

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[1] Primarily the work of Franz Pieper, it was adapted in 1932. Carl S. Meyer has called it "Dr. Pieper's legacy of sound Scriptural teaching," "The Role of the Brief Statement since 1932," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXIII (April, 1962), p. 199. For the text of the Brief Statement, see Concordia Theological Monthly, II (June, 1931), pp. 401-416.

[2] Paragraph 211. For similar statements see paragraphs 215 and 216.

[3] I, p. 517.

[4] I, p. 522.

What emerges is a Christ who is not really "like us" but at best bears some resemblance to the hypothetical man before the Fall, and the implications of the Incarnation get a certain docetistic twist.

> Though consubstantial with us, the human nature of Christ differs from ours in the possession of certain characteristics to which Scripture calls particular attention.[2]

The way in which this is defined means that none of the effects of sin upon the human race affected Jesus except insofar as he chose to assume certain limitations. His human nature could not have sinned. His human nature possessed greater natural gifts and greater natural wisdom and compared in this respect to Adam before the Fall. Jesus, to be sure, relinquished some of the privileges of his sin-less nature and thus it is possible to say that he did not differ in appearance. So, too, Jesus assumed some of our weakness, but Pieper, in pure speculation, suggests that Jesus assumed such infirmities as are common to all men after the Fall, such as hunger, thirst, fatigue, weeping, etc., but not personal infirmities and defects, such as blindness or specific diseases.[1]

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[1] The whole discussion of the "Doctrine of Christ" (II, pp. 55-394) is unsatisfactory. Much of it has a distant air of unreality about it, not so much because it deals with mystery as precisely because so much of the mystery is reduced to a system of scholastic categories.

[2] Ibid., II, p. 71.

> No schooling. . .was necessary for Jesus in his childhood and youth in the sense that evil propensities of the flesh had to be curbed, as must be done in the case of ordinary children. . . . When Mary and Joseph disagreed with him, the son was in the right.[2]

All this is not really redeemed by Pieper's admitting that Jesus nevertheless learned, studied, and grew in wisdom, for it all appears as a kind of arbitrary acting that was not demanded of his nature.[3] One can find no essential identity between Jesus and man as man is here and now.

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[1] Ibid., II, p. 79.

[2] Ibid., II, p. 309.

[3] For an involved, scholastic, and unsatisfactory discussion of Christ's omnipotence and omniscience, see Ibid., II, pp. 158-166. The issues may be real but too much is known about the subject. The profound mystery of the "both God and man" tends to dissolve.

The essential thing here is simply to point to the pervasive influence of an inherited methodology upon the form and content of the theology. It becomes nonsense to assume that someone with a different intellectual tradition working independently of Pieper's sources but with faithfulness to the Scripture would come out with the same results. The task of the modern student when he comes to Pieper will be to get at what Pieper means to say aside from the form in which he says it, to separate the kernel from the metaphysical husk. J. P. Koehler always insisted on trying to do this, and insisted that one must never ride the wording (Wortlaut) but try to grasp the other man's intention, what he means to say with his words.[1] Pieper, however, denied this principle emphatically.[2] For Pieper, and together with him the Lutheran tradition which he represented, form and content were not to be separated. That means that the metaphysical presuppositions become an essential part of the theology. Even a relatively elementary historical and philosophical sophistication might have corrected all this, but such awareness was lacking, and one looks in vain for even the slightest indication that Pieper knew what J. P. Koehler was driving at.

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[1] See his "Analogy of Faith," Faith-Life, XXV (May, 1952), p. 11.

[2] Christian Dogmatics, I, p. 72.

B. The Principles of Sola Scriptura and Verbal Inspiration and What these Meant Hermeneutically

In accordance with the old dogmaticians, Pieper speaks of the two principles of theology. The material principle is the doctrine of Justification, while the formal principle is Scripture. Justification is then the foundation of man's salvation, while Scripture is the foundation of man's language about God.

Franz Pieper's doctrine of the Verbal Inspiration of Scripture, as well as his emphasis on Sola Scriptura are crucial to his theological method, although they are in reality not as important in determining the particular methodology of his theology as one might assume. That is, neither of these two principles necessarily required the hermeneutical principle that dominated orthodoxy. Pieper's doctrine of Scripture did not in itself force his method, as the example of J. P. Koehler bears out.

What is true is that Pieper took over the seventeenth century formulation and applied it within a new historical context and therefore, too, gave it somewhat different meaning. The great advances that had been made in the historical and linguistic disciplines since the period of the orthodox dogmaticians meant that the identical approach in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries could not help but become obscurantist. The total world view, too, had changed. Added to this, the context of Lutheran controversy was different.

The seventeenth century Sola Scriptura emphasis was not identical with but nevertheless was closely associated with the doctrine of Verbal Inspiration. Both were directly connected with the polemic against Catholicism.[1] The Lutherans were primarily intent with the Sola Scriptura upon asserting the adequacy of Scripture alone as over against Scripture and Tradition. Thus, it was important not only to assert the objectivity of the foundation, but also to assert that this Scripture is sufficient, clear, uniform in content, and absolutely trustworthy. Verbal Inspiration gave the dogmaticians an effective and precisely defined tool with which to work. But it should be noted also that

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[1] For the best study of the concepts themselves see Preus' The Inspiration of Scripture. Preus himself does not, however, seem sufficiently aware of the extent to which the polemic with Catholicism determined the doctrinal formulations.

Sola Scriptura and Verbal Inspiration were by no means two sides of the same coin (as Pieper believed they were). One may believe in one without the other, as the example of Catholicism illustrates, or one may believe that the only source we have for faith and life is Scripture and yet not believe in Verbal Inspiration. Even the idea that if Scripture is to be the sole foundation of faith it must also be inerrant is a presupposition.

Pieper identifies the two emphases. Also the point of controversy has shifted quite radically. The primary polemic in Pieper is no longer against Catholicism but against rationalism, the modern world, and especially Protestant modernism, what he calls an "Ich Theologie."

> The human ego, euphemistically called the "Christian consciousness," the "regenerate I," "experience," etc., has become the norm of theology. . . . The overwhelming majority of modern theologians refuses to identify Scripture and the Word of God; and accordingly they do not make Scripture but their own heart the source and judge of Christian doctrine [Italics mine]. This false principle does not merely disturb the order of things in the Christian Church, but turns it upside down.
>
> We on our part, stand for the supreme and sole authority of Holy Scripture. We maintain that Scripture, by virtue of the singular divine act of inspiration is God's own infallible Word.[1]

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[1] Christian Dogmatics, I, pp. 3-4. Note the identifi-

Within his historical context, Pieper felt obliged to protect the Scripture against the modern trends in Biblical criticism, and against the whole scientific revolution of his time. This means--and the point needs to be emphasized--that the nature of the battle has changed. The Bible has become a book that contains propositions giving information on geology, history, geography, biology, etc. A person has to choose science and give up Scripture, or choose Scripture and repudiate science, or somehow achieve the ability to live in two different worlds and keep them separate. At any rate a pervasive anti-intellectualism had to accompany Pieper's doctrine as well as a disastrous defensiveness.[1]

What Pieper meant by Verbal Inspiration need not be further explained. His position was approximately identical to that of the "Princeton Theology."[2] Like the Princeton

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cation of Sola Scriptura and Verbal Inspiration. To give up the latter is necessarily to substitute "faith consciousness." Pieper, of course, did not know modern Formgeschichte. Insofar as the latter says we have only the text to work with it is asserting Sola Scriptura. Yet probably no disciple of the method asserts also Verbal Inspiration.

[1] For an extreme case of Pieper's obscurantism and his attempt to keep a "simple" world, see his repudiation of the Coperican world view, Ibid., I, footnote 11, pp. 473-474.

[2] For a good summary of this with emphasis upon its defensiveness, see Ernest Sandeen's "The Princeton Theology. One Source of Biblical Literalism in American Protestantism," Church History, XXXI (September, 1962), pp. 307-321. For an

men, too, Pieper so seriously compromised the original intent of the Sola Scriptura as an assurance of Scripture's clarity and self-interpreting character, by refuge, in the face of critical problems, to inerrant original autographs, that the doctrine took on the character of an abstraction.[1]

None of this, however, really defines how Scripture is to be used in the task of theology hermeneutically. What is the relationship between the Old and New Testaments? How is doctrine to be established? Shall the stress be on the whole of Scripture or on its parts? To what extent shall Scripture be approached historically? How distinguishable is the form of the Scripture from its content? It is when we raise these questions that we see what was the use made of Verbal Inspiration. Then, too, it becomes obvious that it is simply not true that the methodology of Lutheran scholasticism and of American Lutheran orthodoxy were compelled by a particular inspiration theory. In fact, the precise opposite

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example of the extent to which Pieper's concept of Inspiration put him on the defensive, note his novel way of getting around the discrepancies between the quotations from the Old Testament as used in the New and their original form. "In quoting the Old Testament the Holy Spirit is in a manner quoting himself. And he has the authority to use his own words as he chooses." Christian Dogmatics, I, p. 249.

[1] For the problem in the "Princeton Theology" see the Sandeen article. Pieper did not go so far (partly precisely because he took modern critical studies even less seriously) but he did, however, fall back on the same argument. Ibid., I, p. 237.

is the case. The methodology of scholastic dogmatics with its de-emphasis upon a historical-exegetical approach determined what Verbal Inspiration was to mean hermeneutically and thus led to an atomistic, non-historical proof text methodology. The unprincipled rummaging for proof texts was not in any sense compelled by Verbal Inspiration or Sola Scriptura. J. P. Koehler, at the same time as he sharply criticized the methodology of orthodoxy at this point, was in agreement with the doctrine of Verbal Inspiration,[1] although it ought also be pointed out that he was critical of orthodoxy's preoccupation with the doctrine and especially of using it as a starting point of theology.[2] He criticized the fact that as employed the doctrine had taken the emphasis off the great acts of God in history. Heilsgeschichte as the primary mode of revelation was overlooked and propositional revelation took over. The Scripture was atomized and the Gospel, even the doctrine of Justification, became a timeless abstraction.[1]

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[1] Koehler's Biblische Hermeneutik (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, n.d.,) p. 7.

[2] See his "Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns," Faith-Life, XXV (August, 1952), pp. 10-11. Especially did he feel that such a stress was excessively intellectualistic and inclined to legalism. See his "Erst der Glaube, dann der Verstand," Ibid., IV (June, 1931), pp. 5-7. This was basically a criticism (which the preoccupation with Verbal Inspiration went with) of the "knowledge, assent, and confidence" formula in Lutheran theology.

Scripture, according to Pieper, is not to be studied as a history of salvation, nor is some impression gained from the whole to furnish the key to interpreting the parts. Pieper's position is symbolized by the method of Bible study that prevailed in Lutheran orthodoxy, which insofar as the Bible is not studied coherently as a study of God in relationship to man nor as a history of salvation, is rather dominated by a "Bible story" approach with a series of largely disconnected stories. The approach cannot help but tend toward atomization and abstraction, especially since the religious education program tends to be dominated by an emphasis upon the Catechism (or dogmatics) at the center. The central discipline remains dogmatics coupled with a proof text methodology.

Pieper cultivated the atomistic proof text approach and, in fact, disliked intensely the "ganze Scrift" emphasis.[2] Doctrine must be taken exclusively from the "sedes doctrinae." Such an expression as "The witness of Scripture. . ." would be meaningless to him. Scripture is a whole (as Verbal Inspiration so forcefully declares), and yet, in another sense, it has no wholeness.

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[1] "Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns," Ibid., XXV (August, 1952), p. 10. "Faith wishes to hear. . . History; the intellect thirsts for comprehensive thought complexes, clearly presented. The proper evangelical presentation, therefore, will bring the. . . facts of God's love and mercy."

[2] Koehler, too, was critical of the "ganze Scrift" emphasis in the "Heilsgeschichte" approach of, for instance,

> The queer talk of the "whole of Scripture" as opposed to the "sedes doctrinae" was invented to block the authority of Scripture entirely, while making a pretense of strict conformity, to Scripture.[1]
>
> "The ganze Scrift". . .if anything is pure human self-conceit, the very antithesis of Scripture, it is this "whole of Scripture" which, introduced by Schleiermacher has penetrated. . .into Lutheran theology.[2]

Hand in hand with this goes what was, according to Koehler, so **disastrous** to the Lutheran controversies in America, a reaction against any attempt to get behind the Wortlaut, the form of an expression.

> It is hard to understand how men can make themselves believe that in ascertaining the Christian doctrine one must look not so much to the words (usually called "the letter") of Scriptures as rather to the "content" and import. Here we have one of the many catch phrases which despite their

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J. D. K. von **Hofmann**, but for a somewhat different reason, as see "The Analogy of Faith," Ibid., XXV (April, 1952), pp. 11-12. For a brief but sound summary of von Hofmann, see Paul Leo's "Revelation and History in J. C. K. von Hofmann," Lutheran Quarterly, X (August, 1958), pp. 195-216.

[1] Christian Dogmatics, I, p. 202. [2] Ibid., I, p. 364.

> inanity, endure from generation to generation. It is a formula which requires me to perform a logical and psychological impossibility. You cannot understand the content of a message without the words which express that message. Since the meaning of Scripture, like that of any other writing, lies solely in the words of Scripture, this meaning is certain only because the words are certain and reliable.[1]

What Pieper, of course, feared was a historical approach to Scripture and any progressive view of revelation. Thus he feared any approach which would assume that certain truths became known only at certain historical times or even as a result of certain historical acts. For him Scripture was always a static storehouse of timeless propositional truths, and the historical character of Scripture was irrelevant. So, too, Scripture is more _doctrines_ than _a_ _doctrine_.

> Interpreting the words of Scripture according to historical circumstances not furnished by Scripture itself, but wholly or in part, by contemporary secular writers is false exegesis. All the historical background necessary for the correct understanding of Scrip-

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[1] _Ibid_., I, p. 72. In effect we have here a rationale for total literalism. For Koehler the textual critics' problem in any document is precisely to get at what the author _means_ to say. See "Analogy of Faith," _Faith-Life_, XXV (May, 1952), p. 11. Koehler's whole critique of Pieper's type of approach will be examined more fully in the next chapter.

ture is given by Scripture itself.[1]

Thus, Scripture for Pieper is static. Every part of the Bible is essentially on the same level. No distinctions are made between a passage in Genesis, Isaiah, or John, as proof for a doctrine. Individual passages are used as proof texts regardless of their significance or setting in the historical or literary context. The resurrection of the dead, for instance, is taught already in Genesis.[2] Any talk of a Petrine versus a Pauline emphasis is nonsense. The Incarnation is already known by Old Testament believers, etc. A distinctly New Testament doctrine can be proved for a passage in the Song of Solomon or the immortality of the soul from Ecclesiastes 12:7, (which passage really implies a rather pessimistic skepticism). Pieper fights so strongly against any "progressive revelation" idea that one has to ask whether the giving of the New Testament was not essentially arbitrary or at best only a kind of commentary on the Old Testament.

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[1] Christian Dogmatics, I, p. 101.

[2] Ibid., III, p. 535. Here he objects to Luthardt's statement that "In the Old Testament the teaching of a resurrection becomes evident only gradually."

> How old is the Gospel religion? It was revealed immediately after the Fall in the promise that the Seed of the woman should crush the head of the Serpent. . . . All the Old Testament prophets taught it in *unisono* and all the children of God in the Old Testament believed it *unanimiter*.[1]

In any event, the effect of all this is to treat Scripture as a non-historical storehouse or reference source of individual passages which teach specific doctrines. The Bible comes to bear an amazing resemblance to a reference book or card catalog to be consulted on individual subjects. The sum total of what the individual passages teach is the Christian faith.

C. The Doctrinal and Confessional Presuppositions

When one comes to Pieper's confessional principles the pressures become especially obvious. He was not only working in a Lutheran context where he had to come to grips with the old "*quia*" versus "*quatenus*" question,[2] but he was also working within an American frontier environment which tended to have little sympathy for any kind of creedal emphasis, and which was characterized by a kind of primitivism which believed one could simply jump across the centuries and get right back to the primitive church. To an extent, Pieper was himself guilty of some primitivism and yet he was also a strong confessionalist. He also knew that from time to time the church has been forced to declare its position in the form of creeds and confessions.

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[1] *Ibid*., I, p. 121.

[2] The problem revolves around the kind of subscription to the Lutheran symbols. Does one subscribe "because" (*quia*) the confessions agree with the Word of God, or "insofar as"(*quatenus*) they agree? Pieper insisted on a *quia* subscription. *Ibid*., I, pp. 354-358.

What Pieper was quite obviously not aware of was the extent to which a group's cultural, intellectual, and theological traditions condition its historical creeds.

The confessional problem was, to be sure, a genuine problem and one must at this point realize what American Lutheran orthodoxy was trying to do. That is, C. F. W. Walther, for instance, was clearly intent on establishing on American soil a genuinely Lutheran church. That meant for him a church that took seriously the doctrinal position of Lutheranism as that had emerged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and as it had found its expression in the *Book of Concord*.[1] Such subscription meant for Missouri a "*quia*" subscription.[2]

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[1] Subscription was fuller for some American Lutheran groups than for others. Some subscribed only to the three Ecumenical Creeds, the *Augsburg Confession*, and Luther's *Small Catechism*, and sometimes even this was challenged or qualified, as seen in Ferm's Crisis in *American Lutheran Theology*. For Missouri subscription involved also the *Apology to the Augsburg Confession*, the *Large Catechism*, the *Smalcald Articles*, and the *Formula of Concord*.

[2] For a good discussion of the whole problem, the inade-

> There are many who insist on the quatenus form of subscription--"insofar as" the Symbols teach the Scripture truth. One wonders whether these people take a serious view of the obligation involved. J. G. Walch aptly remarks that with the restrictive quatenus one could place his signature under the Koran or the Racovian Catechism.[1]

What precisely then was Pieper's confessional principle?

He begins by objecting to false conceptions of confessional subscription and says that a "quatenus" (and thus meaningless) subscription occurs whenever people speak of the following:

1. The confessions as being "an essentially correct presentation of the chief doctrines." Each man then is free

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quacy of the old approaches, and a proposal for transcending the "quia" versus "quatenus" issue, see Carl Braaten's "The Crisis of Confessionalism," Dialog, I (Winter, 1962), pp. 38-48.

[1] Ibid., I, p. 354. It should be noted that the Wisconsin Synod had the same form of subscription as the Missouri Synod. It is also true, however, that the Wauwatosa men objected to beginning theology with the confessions. Koehler, while subscribing "quia", approached the confessions historically. That is, he said that the Formula of Concord successfully warded off certain threats to Lutheran theology but at the same time represented a certain deterioration and, at any rate, by the time of the Book of Concord, the transition to scholasticism was becoming obvious. "Luther's Reformation . . . was preserved in the Formula of Concord, but at that the discerning student will recognize that the Formula did not have . . . the ring of Luther's great testimony. . . . Luther's great thoughts had lost their grandeur with the later Lutheran theologians. . . The result was a type of theology that cannot escape the comparison with Catholic scholasticism." "History of the Wisconsin Synod," Faith-Life, XI (May, 1958), p. 13.

to determine what he means by "essential" and what he means by "chief."

2. Subscribing to the confessions "historically." That might mean that what was once true is no longer true.

3. Subscribing with the understanding or reservation that the confessions be interpreted "according to the Scripture."

4. Following the "spirit" rather than the "letter" of the confessions. This paves the way for a subjectivistic individualism which is the alternative to confessionalism.[1]

What subscription does mean is illustrated with a statement taken from Walther.

> Why are the symbolical books. . . to be signed unconditionally? Since the Symbols are confessions of the faith, or doctrine, of the Church, and are the desire to be nothing else, an unconditional subscription to them can mean nothing else than that the solemn affirmation. . . that he [the ordinand] has found the doctrinal content of the Symbols, without any exception whatever, as not conflicting, either in fundamental or in a secondary point of doctrine, with Holy Scriptures. . . . No matter, therefore, what place any doctrine may occupy in the doctrinal system of the

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[1] For the discussion of these four points see Christian Dogmatics, I, pp. 355-356. The third point is not quite as crass as it sounds. Calvinists, Pieper points out, have accepted the Unaltered Augsburg Confession in that sense.

> Symbols and in what form it may occur there . . . the unconditional subscription pertains to every one of them.[1]

The real problem, and what J. P. Koehler objected to, was the effect of the kind of confessionalism cultivated by orthodoxy. It is at this point that Pieper's metaphysical presuppositions, his methodology with Scripture, and his high confessionalism come together in such a way that one can hardly avoid the conclusion that the results are always known ahead of time. If one has studied the earlier dogmaticians, if he knows the way Scripture is used, and if he knows the _Book of Concord_, and if he knows, too, the kind of mentality which tends to go with this kind of orthodoxy together with its tendency to treat also the fathers of the church (as Walther or Pieper) as authorities in their own right even before any fundamental examination of their work, then one can predict with precision what he will find in the _Christian Dogmatics_. Thus there gets to be a kind of circle which can be neither transcended nor broken. The doctrinal system assumes an air of infallibility, and the work of any non-

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[1] _Ibid._, I, p. 357. But even this is ambiguous. The _Book of Concord_ calls the pope the Antichrist, and Pieper insisted on this. But the perpetual virginity of Mary is also asserted and this was not insisted on. For a fuller discussion of Pieper's kind of confessionalism, see Arthur Carl Piepkorn's "Walther and the Lutheran Symbols," _Concordia Theological Monthly_, XXXII (October, 1961), pp. 606-620.

Lutheran or even Scripture itself is always looked at from the starting point of the system which Lutheran dogmatics has produced. There develops a strong tendency toward such things as:

1. Using the confessions as an authoritative and coherent principle with which to begin the theological task. Since one has the truth he then proceeds to prove it.[1]

2. Absolutizing the confessions. Along with this an almost gnostic stress upon an intellectual knowledge of the faith and an insistence that the pure doctrine must be known with an absolute certainty.

3. Using the confessions in a way in which theoretically only Scripture is to be used.[2] To prove that one is at variance with the confessions is to prove beyond doubt that one is a heretic.[3]

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[1] Koehler finds this mentality as an especially disastrous accompaniment of orthodoxy, "even when the orthodoxy is in itself sound," Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns," Faith-Life, XXV (August, 1952), p. 9.

[2] For Pieper's unsatisfactory attempt to avoid this trap, see Christian Dogmatics, I, p. 358.

[3] This became true also of the new confessions that tended to proliferate. The problem still exists in orthodoxy. Thus there are even today strong pressures toward making a full-scale confession out of the Brief Statement of 1932, and to use it then in the sense above. For a glaring example of precisely this, see Paul Zimmermann's "Letter to the Editor," Cresset, XXIV (March, 1961), pp. 25-26. The subject is evolution, and Zimmermann attempts to prove his case

4. Toward developing a demand for an absolute uniformity of doctrine, even as to mode of expression.[1] Any creative theological activity becomes extremely risky insofar as one might decide he has to re-evaluate a certain formulation while he also knows that this freedom will not be allowed.

5. So stressing the system of doctrine which is to be believed ("*fides quae creditur*") that faith itself in the sense of trust is minimized. That is, as J. P. Koehler says, "right faith" is emphasized "where the emphasis has shifted from '*faith*' to '*right*'. . .and legalism obtrudes itself here in the form of *harping on orthodoxy* (*Pochen auf Rechtglauebigkeit*)."[2]

6. Always approaching the non-Lutheran with the prior demand that he become Lutheran before any expression of fellowship can be expressed. What Koehler sees as a fundamental lack of an "ecumenical spirit" then takes over.[3]

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from the *Brief Statement*, and brand any kind of evolutionism as heresy. A reply which attacks Zimmermann at this point is the letter of John Gergely in the May issue of the same magazine, p. 26.

[1] *Christian Dogmatics*, III, p. 426.

[2] "Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns," *Faith-Life*, XXV (August, 1952), p. 9.

[3] *Ibid*., (September, 1952), p. 12. "When our doctrinal discussions are carried on in such a tone that we are out to show the other: *you* are wrong, your position is *incorrect*, ours is *correct*; when *correcting* holds the spotlight and the

Most important to the whole subject of method in our context of Midwestern American Lutheranism was the inability of this kind of theology ever to transcend its method, to subject itself to analysis and self-criticism, to free itself from a hermeneutical method which was not required by the subject with which it dealt, and which effectively made impossible any way to unity among the contending parties to the strifes that attended this Lutheranism. Thus, too, Koehler saw nothing but an impasse, an impasse which would live on unless a new approach to theology were cultivated.

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regard for the growth of the unifying bond of faith is crowded into the dim background then there is present, . . . the arts of the legalist. . . . In the course of time legalism has crept into the way the confessional writings are used and so spoiled the Christians' consciousness of the one Church."

Chapter V

JOHN PHILIP KOEHLER'S CRITIQUE

It may seem that too much attention has been paid to the theological approach of Franz Pieper. However, in view of the fact that the Wauwatosa Theology and J. P. Koehler in particular believed that what Pieper represented methodologically did, in point of fact, personify the methodology of Midwestern American Lutheranism,[1] that this methodology personified, too, what Koehler believed kept the synods concerned involved in a continuous series of controversies which partly just because an adequate historical-exegetical groundwork was lacking could not help but end up in deadlocks, then the examination of Franz Pieper's Christian Dogmatics is perhaps the best single means to appreciate the criticism leveled by the Wauwatosa Theology against the Lutheranism of its time and place.

The inability to bring any doctrinal issue to a satisfactory conclusion was illustrated above all as far as Koehler was concerned by the disastrous and largely futile Election Controversy of the 1880's. It was Koehler's reaction to what he saw as the basic issues involved in that conflict that led to his 1904 essay, "The Analogy of Faith," which is his clearest articulation of hermeneutics.[1]

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[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XIV (May, 1941), pp. 6-10.

In our relatively brief examination of the Election Controversy, it is important to emphasize that our concern is to look at the issue as Koehler looked at it and to view it then primarily in relationship to his call for reorientation in theology. The conflict itself, as will be indicated, was in fact a good deal more complicated than Koehler apparently thought it was. It was an oversimplification, for instance, to view the battle almost exclusively (insofar as methodology played in) as a conflict between the heritage of scholastic dogmatics, on the one hand, and an exegetical tendency, on the other.[2] It may also be that Koehler's assessment of the conflict was not as helpful as he thought it was. It may be, too, that Koehler's own conception of Election is open to serious criticism.[3] However, all this is really quite irrelevant to our problem which is not to determine who was right and wrong in the controversy, but to examine rather how Koehler viewed the methodological issue at stake in the conflict, how he tried to meet this issue, and the sense in which he believedthat the *Election Controversy* pointed up what was wrong in the theological tradition of American Lutheran orthodoxy.

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[1] It was a good deal more satisfactory than his Biblische Hermeneutik, although the latter was used for years as the study basis in Koehler's New Testament classes. For a translation of the Biblische Hermeneutik, see "Biblical Hermeneutics," Faith-Life, XXVIII (August, September, October, November, 1955). For the background to the "Analogy of Faith" essay, see "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XV (September, 1942), pp. 9-10.

[2] As will be apparent, Koehler was always convinced that in this particular conflict the Missourians were less handicapped by their methodological tradition than were the opponents, especially the Ohioans, who remained in bondage to the dogmatics of the fathers. Ibid., XIV (May, 1941), p. 7.

[3] For Koehler's best statement on Election, see the appropriate sections of his "Pauli Hochgesang von Christo;

Although the literature on the controversy is enormous and quite accessible,[1] and although a study of it and what it represented could not help but contribute to an interpretation of the Lutheranism involved, the material has not received any significant attention. E. Clifford Nelson, in his *Union Movement Among Norwegian American Lutherans*,

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Auslegung des Briefes an die Epheser," especially the treatment of "Gnadenwahl," *Faith-Life*, IX (February, 1936), pp. 10-14.

[1] No complete bibliography has been compiled, but among the more significant and revealing items are the following: C. F. W. Walther, *The Controversy Concerning Election*. Translated by August Crull (St. Louis: Concordia, 1881); Walther, *The Doctrine Concerning Election Presented in Questions and Answers*. Translated by J. Humberger (St. Louis: Concordia, 1881; Franz Pieper, *Zur Einigung der Amerikanische-Lutherischen Kirke in der Lehre von der Bekehrung und Gnadenwahl* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1913); and the volume edited by George H. Schodde, *The Error of Modern Missouri; Its Inception, Development, and Refutation*, (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1897). The latter is especially significant both as a critique of Missouri and as a defense of the old dogmaticians. The Schodde volume represents, rather than the well-covered story of the conflict among the Norwegians on the issue, what Koehler saw as the dominant approach of Missouri's opponents.

includes a careful study of the controversy among the Norwegians, but since his interpretation of Norwegian American Lutheranism does not necessarily apply to the issue among the German American synods, it does not prove particularly helpful for our purpose either.[1]

Perhaps the best summary of the controversy, although quite partisan, is available in the second edition of J. P. Neve's Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America. In summary it may be said that the Election Controversy dealt with what has been a problem of long-standing in Lutheranism, which must somehow manage to walk a tightrope between Calvinism and synergism, between a "danger either of making man an automaton or of ascribing to unconverted man spiritual powers and abilities which the doctrine of original sin does not permit."[2] There is, furthermore, the Lutheran emphasis upon "justification through faith alone," which means to say that man's salvation is in no sense dependent upon anything he does but is solely a gift of God. If then faith were to be treated as though it were a condition of salvation which man must produce in order to win the grace of God, faith has not only become a good work but grace, too, has lost its objectivity and is in some sense dependent upon and conditioned by man's response. Man's predicament consists in his alienation from God, his need to get right with God, but at the same time his inability to make himself right. The Lutheran tradition then means to say that the Gospel is a gospel, i.e., good news, precisely when it is the proclamation that God in Christ comes to men, that God in Christ wills the salvation of all men, and that man has security before God not in having met conditions imposed by God before God can or will become gracious, not in looking inwardly either at the quality of one's own faith, but in looking outside oneself to the promise and offer of free grace in Christ. Faith is no condition but simply the means by which man

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[1] For instance, whatever the explanation may be, there is no question but that the rejection of the Missouri Synod position on Election by a significant portion of Norwegian-American Lutheranism and the use and defense by these same Norwegians of the "intuitu fidei" formulation as that had been inherited from the seventeenth century dogmaticians, did, in fact, tend to accompany the emergence of a somewhat broad-church emphasis. It is also true that the anti-Missourian group of Norwegians tended, as the history of the United Norwegian American Lutheran Church (1890-1917) quite clearly indicates, to represent a gradual emancipation from the whole tradition of scholastic orthodoxy. This much is probably not in question, but see Nelson and Fevold, The Lutheran Church Among Norwegian-Americans, II, pp. 229-240. J. P. Koehler's analysis, at any rate, does not fit the Norwegian story.

[2] Eugene Fevold, History of Norwegian-American Luther-

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anism, 1870-1890 (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1951), pp. 311-312.

trusts in the objective fact that God is, in fact, gracious.[1]

Historically, Lutheranism has tried to take seriously both the universal *Will of Grace* and the concept of particular *Election*,[2] to take seriously, too, the question that inevitably arises if God genuinely wills the salvation of all and if man's salvation is a gift prior to and independent of man's meeting of any conditions demanded by God, of why some are saved and not others ("*Cur Alii Prae Aliis*?"). One view (what is often referred to as the "First Form" of *Election*) simply asserts both the universal *Will of Grace* and particular *Election* but leaves the solution as a paradox impossible of logical definition.

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[1] However unsatisfactorily stated it may have been and however wooden its formulation became in F. Pieper (*Christian Dogmatics*, III, pp. 473-503), that precisely the evangelical interest in grounding man's security of salvation in God's promise was at the heart of C. F. W. Walther's theology of *Election*, and that it was thus no dogmatic abstraction at issue, is demonstrated in Walther's *Controversy Concerning Election*, pp.2-3. Since *Election* is a certain election of grace and prior to man's response, man can rest his salvation in God, take joy in it, and he thus is secure. Thus, too, Koehler, while faulting Walther's terminology, insisted that what he meant was "to emphasize the reliability of the promise and the certainty of the blessing," "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XVI (September, 1943), p. 6.

[2] Based primarily on such New Testament passages of St. Paul as Romans 8:28-30; 2 Timothy 1:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; and Ephesians 1:3-6.

> The classical Lutheran view asserts that man must not speculate about the "hidden things of God." There is no information available to us regarding the *deus absconditus*, the God who hides himself. Redemptively we can know only the God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ. Since the Christian cannot know the total situation, he cannot accept the rigorous determinism of Calvinism in the realm of the spirit. For the sake of Christ, God is gracious to all men, and it is his serious desire that all men be saved. . . . On the other hand, the Lutheran view denies man any spiritual powers whereby he can cooperate in his own salvation. If a man becomes a Christian, it is due *totally* to God's grace in Christ. If a man is lost, it is totally his own fault and responsibility. . . . God has the credit *in toto* when man is saved; man has the responsibility *in toto* when he is lost. A close examination will show that this is the affirmation of a paradox, not a logical contradiction.[1]

On the other hand, this "classical Lutheran view" is not so unambiguous. The "classical" Lutheran dogmatics of the seventeenth century had problems with *Election* (as might be expected, given its nature together with the methodology of that dogmatics with its "*causa*" scheme). Thus, the dogmaticians came up with what has popularly been known as the "Second Form" of *Election*.[2] Those whom God foreknew would come to faith he also predestined to salvation. Thus this second view spoke of Election "intuitu fidei" (in view of faith).[1] Here any trace of Calvinism is rejected and the logical paradox of the "First Form"is overcome. At the same time one might validly ask whether this is in any meaningful sense Election at all. More seriously, in view of the Lutheran fear of any kind of synergism and Lutheranism's pessimism in regard to man's possibilities before God aside from grace, it might appear that this second view implies that God is effectively gracious if one believes. Faith then becomes both a condition demanded at the same time as it is a demand for the impossible.[2] In addition,

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[1] *What Then Is Man?* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1958), p. 58. This is a good statement of one position (the "First Form"), the position that Walther and the Missourians were upholding.

[2] See Nelson and Fevold, I, pp. 256-257, for a brief discussion of the historical background of the two views on

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Election. For what may be the most thorough and scholarly study of the origin of the two forms, see George J. Fritschel, Die Schriftlehre von der Gnadenwahl. (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1906).

[1] For a summary of Election as treated by the old dogmaticians and their use of the "intuitu fidei" see Schmid, pp. 270-292.

[2] That this conclusion was not meant by the old dogmaticians was granted by the opponents of "intuitu fidei" in the 1880's. See, for instance, U. V. Koren's En Redegjoerelse, translated by George Lillegaard and printed in Grace for Grace, pp. 173-188. This was written in the immediate aftermath of the conflict (1884) and is a good summary of the Missourian position. The Missourians did, however, maintain that unless "intuitu fidei" was used synergistically, it failed to solve anything. Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, III pp. 489-490.

such a position carried to its conclusions raises certain basic questions about the very nature of God.

At any rate, the Election Controversy became by far the most violent debate of Midwestern American Lutheranism.[1] It tore the synods apart as nothing previously had done, permanently separated the Ohio and Missouri Synods,[2] and alienated the main body of Norwegian-American Lutherans from the Missouri Synod.[3] In the end Missouri stood alone with the Wisconsin Synod and the remnants of the Norwegian Synod. Walther's dream of a single Evangelical Lutheran Church in America went up in smoke.[4] In addition, "the

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[1] For a fairly full treatment of its historical background, outbreak, and progress, see Schodde, pp. 53-190. For a brief but generally sound summary, see Wentz, pp. 212-216.

[2] The break between Missouri and Ohio took place at Wheeling, West Virginia, in 1881. For the story and the polemics, see P. A. Peter and Wm. Schmidt, Geschichte der Allgemeinen Evangelische-Lutherischen Synode von Ohio und Andern Staaten (Columbus, Ohio: Verlagshandlung der Synode, 1900), pp. 227-238.

[3] No group was internally disrupted to anything like the extent that the Norwegian Synod was. Nelson and Fevold, I, pp. 253-270. For a passionate defense of the Missourian position among the Norwegians, see Grace for Grace, pp. 166-199.

[4] Wentz, p. 212. For an interesting account and evaluation of Walther's "State Synods" idea, see "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XIV (January, February, 1941), pp. 3-6, 5-9.

Iowa Synod soon took a position against the views as proposed by Dr. Walther holding them to be a deviation from the old Lutheran Doctrine."[1]

J. P. Koehler, who lived through the conflict and took his stand for Walther's position, as he looked back, saw the whole Election Controversy as the somewhat accidental result of a series of unfortunate things, as a commentary on the state of Midwestern American Lutheranism, and as an especially concrete demonstration of the futility of an approach to theology which, paradoxically, had been especially cultivated by the Missouri Synod.[2] On all sides there was fault and theological ambiguity.

> The upshot of all this unrest and confusion and the forces at work. . .hardly were a credit to any of the embattled parties or to the theology of the day. A mistaken zeal for the house of God; high emotion, and a certain amount of indifference; intense loyalty to personalities and synods,

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[1] Neve, History of the Lutheran Church in America, p. 279. Note Neve's description of Walther's views as a "deviation" from the dogmaticians. This was precisely what Koehler maintained was at root of the problem, an undue and indiscriminate reliance on the formulations of the dogmaticians. In this respect Missouri broke its own methodological practice. "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XIV (May, 1941), p. 7.

[2] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XIV (May, 1941), p. 8.

> on the other hand, individualism and independence; ruthlessness and ill breeding, intensified by the study of Flacius' and Calov's polemics--all were at play, more or less according to geographical antecedents, theological training, and personal make-up.[1]

Even given all this, the conflict might have been avoided or, at least, it might not have led to the deadlock it did, had it not been for the faulty theological technique. The whole conflict was hardly surprising "in view of this preoccupation with the theology of the fathers and the tradition of the St. Louis seminary. . ., in view of the indoctrination of the rank and file of the pastors by the general use of the large Dietrich catechism which perpetuated the intuitu fidei of the fathers along with their whole system of dogmatics."[2] Thus, in addition to all the other factors at play, the controversy was produced by "the theological training of the time in general and the Missourian in particular."[3]

What Koehler did find surprising and what, as he saw it, should not have happened according to logical expectations was that Walther and Missouri should have taken issue with the tradition of the old dogmaticians and arrived at the doctrinal position they did arrive at. Thus it was thoroughly remarkable

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[1] Ibid., p. 9.

[2] Ibid., p. 7.

[3] Ibid., p. 7.

> that it was given to Walther and those who stood with him to take exception to the false approach to the Scriptures typified by the _intuitu_ _fidei_, rather than to those Lutherans, west and east and abroad, who prided themselves on a more up-to-date theological technique, in keeping with nineteenth century German theology, and unanimously condemned the new "Missourian" doctrine. It was not "Missourian" at all, until the rather savage attacks on Walther at the outbreak of the controversy served to rally his followers around him; for previously. . .the teaching and preaching of _Election_ was steered around as a rather dangerous subject, and those who concerned themselves about it and differed with the fathers were considered extremists and called _Gnadenwahler_.[1]

At any rate, Missouri firmly discarded the "_intuitu fidei_" of the dogmaticians and stood on the "First Form" of _Election_, while Ohio stood just as firmly for the "Second Form." Ohio, Iowa, and the best part of the Norwegians were permanently alienated from the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods. On both sides the polemics were immoderate. Ohio insisted that Missouri, all its protestations to the contrary not withstanding, was in fact Calvinistic.[1] The charge was quite obviously nonsense, although this writer must admit that Walther and his disciples did make a number of statements which, especially out of context, came dangerously close to Calvinism.[2] Even today the charge is not yet dead.[3] In similar fashion, the Missourians regularly labeled the "*intuitu fidei*" people as synergists and even Pelagians.[4]

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[1] _Ibid_., Koehler here refers to the fact that the opponents of Missouri, especially the Ohioans, got opinions on the subject from Lutheran theologians in the East and Germany whom otherwise the Ohioans had little time for. Ironically, the Lutherans who otherwise called the Missourians "repristinationists" in this case condemned Missouri for in effect not being "repristination" enough.

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[1] This is more or less the burden of the whole Schodde volume. See especially pp. 571-759, entitled, "A Testimony Against the False Doctrine of Predestination Recently Introduced by the Missouri Synod."

[2] As an especially bad example, Schodde quotes without citation (but since the quotation was not challenged in the Missourian reviews, one may assume it was authentic) Walther as follows: "Many a father, we are told [by Walther] is more gracious to one child than to another, because it is more obedient, and gives him more pleasure. . . . God deals with us in the same way, only He does not even inquire whether we have obyed Him or not; He does simply as He pleases," p. 245. That this was not the main thrust of Walther's conception is clear from his *Doctrine Concerning Election Presented in Questions and Answers*.

[3] See H. S. Smith, R. T. Handly, and L. A. Loetscher, *American Christianity* (New York: Scribners, 1963), II, p. 350.

[4] See Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics*, II, pp. 488-491. The theme really runs through the whole of his *Zur Einigung der Amerikanische-Lutherischen Kirche in der Lehre von der Bekehrung und Gnadenwahl*.

Here, too, the charge was largely irresponsible, although there was some basis in fact for Walther's suspicions. Thus, some of the "*intuitu fidei*" people did emphasize man's "Self-Determination."[1] It is the writer's impression that F. A. Schmidt, the leading exponent of the "Second Form" of *Election* among the Norwegians, really was something of a synergist. Even as late as 1908, more than 20 years after the controversy, he refused to accept the thesis that in conversion "the glory belongs to God alone."[2]

J. P. Koehler had no time for the heresy charges on either side and preferred to follow the example of Adolph Hoenecke, whose strongest judgment on the "*intuitu fidei*" exponents was that they were guilty of "inconsistencies."[3] For the whole complex and attitude that characterized much of the Missourian approach Koehler had no sympathy, as little as for the constant charge of Calvinism brought against Missouri by its opponents. He felt that the contending parties were closer to each other in actual faith than either side realized. The differences were primarily intellectualistic, although Koehler by no means considered the controversy a mere quibbling about words. Quite the opposite, he was convinced that if the real issue at stake had been recognized and if this problem of hermeneutics had been threshed out and followed up, the Election Controversy might have signified a major breakthrough that might have revitalized the theology of Midwestern American Lutheranism and prepared a way toward unity.

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[1] The terminology, though hardly Lutheran, did not necessarily imply synergism. Koehler, also an opponent of "*intuitu fidei*," says that those who used such an expression "were not deliberately teaching synergism, the idea that man's salvation is partly his own doing and merit. . .but were involved in an attempt to rationalize that which the Scriptures do not explain, to wit: why, with equal guilt of all mankind and equal love of God toward all, some are saved and many are not." "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XIV (May, 1941), p. 6.

[2] Nelson, *Union Movement Among Norwegian American Lutherans*, p. 447.

[3] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XVI (September, 1943), p. 6.

This did not happen. The intersynodical conferences during the early years of the twentieth century brought together representatives of the various synods that had disagreed, but in the end broke down with no success, and by 1907, the Missouri Synod had decided to take no part in further conferences.[1] The fact that the debates continued according to the old procedures and were grounded in quotations from the fathers meant for Koehler that no progress had been made.[1]

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[1] Koehler carries some account of these and their problem. Ibid., XVI (October, 1943), pp. 7-11. For an Ohioan's report on the same conferences, see Neve, History of the Lutheran Church in America, pp. 200-221. For a full report of the specific conference that tried to iron out the problem of Election, see "Bericht Ueber die Verhandlung auf der Intersynodalen Konferenz in Fort Wayne, Indiana," Theologische Quartalschrift, IV (January, April, 1907), pp. 50-60, 122-128.

At this point it is necessary to re-emphasize the fact that Koehler stood firmly with the Missourians on the doctrine itself. He categorically denies that the battle represented a conflict between a rigid orthodoxy, held to by Missouri and its "crypto-Calvinistic" supporters, and a more flexible evangelicalism represented by the opponents of Missouri.[2] In fact, Koehler claims that just the opposite was the case. All sides shared the same theological presuppositions but Missouri in this instance came closer to transcending its methodological tradition than did its opponents. Missouri stopped with the mystery unsolved and refused then to make a paradox of faith a riddle to be logically figured out. Thus, too, Missouri let the rational, scholastic character of its theology be sacrificed. The opponents were the ones who insisted on superimposing a system on the Scripture. Missouri insisted on the universal _Will of Grace_, on the _Sola Gratia_ character of salvation, repudiated all synergism, and refused to reduce _Election_ to a meaningless tautology. Thus, Koehler claimed that the real scholastics were the "_intuitu fidei_" people who were incapable in this instance of freeing themselves from the "ball-and-chain effect" of an inherited system of dogmatics.[1] This did not mean for Koehler that Walther and the Missourians adequately treated the issue or escaped the dogmatic tradition,[2] but that given the governing methodology Missouri did better than its opponents.

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[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XVI (October, 1943), p. 6.

[2] _Ibid_., XV (May, 1941), p. 7.

Whether Koehler was correct on the issue itself is really not relevant. The relevant thing is that he saw in the Election Controversy the possibility of a breakthrough in the theological tradition and a starting point toward a historical-exegetical approach to theology. Nor is it really relevant to object that Koehler oversimplified the issues at play in the strife. He no doubt did oversimplify. Especially was it an oversimplification to see the controversy almost exclusively in terms of a protest, even if accidental and unconscious on Missouri's part, against a "repristination" theology.[3] This was at best a half truth. The opponents of

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[1] Ibid., XVI (December, 1943), p. 10.

[2] For instance, as will become more apparent, Koehler claimed that both sides were excessively preoccupied with "faith" as a body of doctrine, with the Fides quae creditur ("the faith which is to be believed") and thus, too, with a theological system. Ibid., XV (September, 1942), p. 9.

[3] Koehler, "Die Synodalkonferenz in der Geschichte der Amerikansiche-Lutherischen Kirche," Theologische Quartalschrift, XIX (July, 1922), pp. 173-175.

Missouri were not only, as Koehler correctly observed, more "repristination" in that they simply carried over and held on to the terminology and approach of the seventeenth century dogmaticians, the thing Missouri was generally charged with, but they were at the same time, paradoxically, also more "American." This point Koehler seemed to miss entirely. But insofar as the "Second Form" people emphasized such things as man's "self-determination," "freedom of the will," "cooperation in conversion," etc., they were undeniably more in keeping with the whole spirit of nineteenth century American democratic thought. They seemed certainly thus to have an emphasis which was truer to the facts of life as they were experienced on the American frontier than any theology which stressed the passivity of man.[1] It is very probably true that among the Norwegians the "intuitu fidei" conception of Election was not so much "repristination" as it was an adaptation to the American environment. This makes sense, too, of the fact that among the Norwegians the groups that opposed Missouri did in fact tend to represent a broad church evangelicalism.[1] In this context, Koehler's analysis does not really fit the facts.

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[1] See, for instance, Ralph Henry Gabriel's Course of American Democratic Thought (New York: Ronald Press, 1940). The themes which Gabriel sees as pervasive in the nineteenth century democratic movement were certainly not very consistent with the "First Form" of Election or with the pessimism about man that went along with this view. Nor did this form of Election have any simple conception of a fundamental law in operation. Although in a sense beside the point of this study, the question would inevitably arise how a group which held to such thoroughly un-American doctrines of man and of grace could succeed as Missouri did. The answer may well lie in Missouri's genius for cultivating an American activism along with a theology which seemed ill equipped for the task. This, too, would illustrate the difference between theory and practice. The question is intriguing, but the answer is probably hinted at in Jaroslav Pelikan's dig at a Lutheran synod (certainly Missouri) which at a convention could spend hours debating whether a

The writer, on the other hand, knows of nothing which would indicate that Koehler's analysis of the conflict insofar as it involved the Ohio and Missouri Synods was not correct. That is, the writer knows of no reason to question the Ohio Synod's dogmatic tendency in the battle on Election. The Schodde volume which is an Ohio Synod production and from beginning to end a defense of "intuitu fidei", is a thoroughly "repristination" approach. All through the Ohioans are here defending and perpetuating the views of the old dogmaticians and in effect trying to prove their case by proving their agreement with the fathers. The volume, in fact, represents an excellent documentation of Koehler's continual complaint that the dominance

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certain formulation was sufficiently anti-synergistic and then go right on to discuss a practical program predicated on a very synergistic activism. See his "American Lutheranism: Denomination or Confession?" Christian Century, LXXX (December 5, 1963), p. 1609. This may well be Missouri's historical tradition.

[1] See Nelson, Union Movement Among Norwegian American Lutherans, pp. 620-631; Nelson and Fevold, The Lutheran Church Among Norwegian-Americans, II, pp. 229-240.

of dogmatics in the centuries preceding the *Election Controversy* had put the coherent study ("das zusammenhaengende Studium") of Scriptures largely out of business, and even where Scripture was studied (as it certainly was) it was forced to bow under the guardianship of dogmatics, so that genuine historical-exegetical study was stymied.[1]

The *Election Controversy* should have shocked Midwestern American Lutheranism out of its "coma of doctrinal infallibility ."[2] In effect it did nothing of the sort. Koehler believed that if anything should have caused the Missourians to take a thorough and critical look at the way they did theology it should have been the discovery that the fathers whom they were continually citing[3] were neither so orthodox nor so reliable. And if the dogmaticians had gone wrong on *Election*, as the whole Missourian position declared, then what was to say that they were not wrong also at other points? If it had proven wrong to "repristinate" the dogmaticians on Election, why might it not be wrong to do so also otherwise? If the Missourian position that the two apparently different assertions of Scripture regarding the universal Will of Grace and particular Election must not be rationalized away in the interests of a harmonious dogma, then might it not also be true that the dogmatics which had produced the "intuitu fidei" was at this point only a logical effect of an excessive preoccupation with a neat but essentially abstract system? If it was recognized that the "intuitu fidei" was an artificial construction of dogmatics, should not this have personified the danger inherent in the methodology of Lutheran orthodoxy? Might it not be an illustration of taking "Scripture as the material which God has given us in order to build of it an edifice of thought whose construction has been entrusted to us?"[1] If all sides had taken to heart the disastrous effects of the Election Controversy and the subsequent inability to overcome these effects should not this have led to a fundamental awareness of a need for new beginnings?

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[1] "Die Synodalkonferenz in der Geschichte der Amerikanische-Lutherischen Kirche," *Theologische Quartalschrift*, XIX (July, 1922), p. 175.

[2] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XV (November, 1942), p. 16.

[3] For an excellent illustration of the "citation" character of the Missourian tradition, see Walther's 1879 edition of J. G. Baier's *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*. Here the theses of Baier were supplemented by short pertinent excerpts from the Lutheran fathers. For this reason Walther was called a "citation theologian." Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, I, p. 165.

The best proof that none of the orthodox synods had really been shocked by the conflict of the 1880's, nor through it learned to reorient themselves theologically is the fact, as pointed out in the previous chapter of this study, that throughout the period in which J. P. Koehler did his work all the groups concerned continued to do theology in the same manner as before the Election Controversy took place. If one accepts Koehler's analysis of the problem this was to be expected of the Ohio Synod and those who stood with her on the "intuitu fidei." But neither had Missouri in any way been shocked. In fact, one may safely generalize by saying that the Missouri Synod, rather than her opponents, has in the popular mind come to personify exactly the sort of theological approach that Koehler believed the Missourians were unwittingly freeing themselves from by their stand on the Election issue.[1] The very fact that Franz Pieper's Christliche Dogmatik began appearing in printed form in 1917, almost 40 years after the outbreak of the Election Controversy, is the best proof that nothing positive in the way of theological methodology came out of the conflict. To be sure, Pieper disagreed, and disagreed sharply, with the tradition of the old dogmaticians at one particular point of doctrine, but otherwise perpetuated the same type of theological approach that Koehler regarded as responsible for the intersynodical controversies here in America. And while it is true that the Wauwatosa Theology in the end failed, just as the Election Controversy had, to change anything, so that all the groups went their own ways apparently oblivious of what Wauwatosa was talking about, or even of its existence, yet J. P. Koehler's lifelong criticism of the tradition of Midwestern American Lutheranism remains a significant variation on the dominant theme of his theological environment.

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[1] "Analogy of Faith," Faith-Life, XXV (January, 1952), p. 14.

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[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XIV (May, 1941), p. 7.

The Election Controversy was, then, the background of Koehler's hermeneutical essay, "The Analogy of Faith," while its immediate context was the deadlock of the intersynodical conferences which both perpetuated the old differences and introduced new ones. In those conferences the whole problem of the "analogy of faith" came up for discussion. In the end, as we have noted, and as Koehler believed was inevitable, the conferences collapsed after several years in which "the discussions continued in their dogmatical course, with the usual results that the opponents, not having a clear conception of how to handle language, as a real exegetical study. . . might have taught them, most readily misinterpreted each other's speech and arrived at no understanding."[1]

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[1] Ibid., XV (September, 1942), p. 10.

The "Analogy of Faith," while written out of this immediate context, is of interest to this study because it sets the theme that was to dominate Koehler's writings throughout his theological career, and it articulates, too, what was the peculiar emphasis of the Wauwatosa Theology within Midwestern American Lutheranism.

Essentially, Koehler wants to insist that the way to unity is through exegesis ("Schriftauslegung"), history, and self-critical analysis, and that dogmatics, although important and although it belongs together with the exegetical and historical studies at the core of the theological enterprise, must nevertheless follow and not precede the historical-exegetical work,[1] that the theologian must first listen to the Scripture,[2] and that in this listening he must continually check himself and guard against superimposing on Scripture any abstract system or principle which determines ahead of time what Scripture may or may not say and thereby become guilty of creating a neat, simple, and logical structure consisting of separate truths adding up to a system of doctrine tied together by one dogma at the top or at least tied together by some external principle which furnishes a kind of key to unlock the Scripture.[1]

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[1] Koehler, Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte, p. vi.

[2] Ibid., p. vii.

Just this problem and the confusion as to what constituted the key came out in the intersynodical discussions. At the first such conference in which Wisconsin Synod men took part (April 19-20, 1903, at Watertown, Wisconsin), one of the Ohio Synod men objected to a point made by Franz Pieper and then injected the idea of the "analogy of faith."

> Professor Pieper replied by saying that virtually the analogy of faith is the doctrine of justification with which every other doctrine must be in harmony. By no means all those present agreed to this answer. . . . Professor Koehler suggested that the analogy of faith as the topic. At the second meeting there were as many opinions as speakers. No one thought of carefully examining Romans 12:6, where the phrase is used by St. Paul. The expression had been used for over fifteen hundred years in the church as a technical principle of interpretation, and so all the answers given were based on the various statements of the dogmaticians.[2]

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[1] "Analogy of Faith," Faith-Life, XXIV (October, 1952), p. 6.

[2] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XV (September, 1942), p. 9. The passage in Romans reads as follows in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible: "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith." The last phrase literally translated would read, "According to the analogy of faith." There was obvious confusion among the contending parties here in America. The Schodde volume documents the un-

Koehler found the hermeneutical principles used by both sides indefensible. Both operated with a concept of the "analogy of faith" which, although frequently fuzzy, was in any event a construction of dogmatics which Koehler believed confused the problem of exegetical work. This much had at least come down through the tradition of Lutheran orthodoxy that Romans 12:6 provides a technical principle of interpretation. Thus, for instance, the seventeenth century statement of Johann Gerhard illustrates this conviction.

> All interpretation of Scripture should be according to the analogy of faith. This canon is taught in Romans 12:6, and signifies that the interpretation of Scripture should be instituted and carried on in such a manner as to accord with the usual line of thought which is conveyed in Scripture. . . . For. . . all things in it are harmonious and perfectly consistent with each other,so that no discrepancy or self-contradiction can occur. *The articles of faith, which the apostle here means by pistis, the knowledge of which is neces-*

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clarity of the Ohioans, for instance, on precisely the meaning of the "analogy of faith." Franz Pieper, too, is very ambiguous. Running throughout his *Christian Dogmatics* is the theme that "justification by faith" is the key to theology and thus, in effect, the "analogy of faith." At other times he seems to refer to some summary of the main doctrines of the Christian faith topped by "justification." It is easier to say precisely what Pieper did not believe the "analogy of faith" to be than what he did mean by it. See *Christian Dogmatics*, I, pp. 359-367. The important point is that all sides operated with the "analogy of faith" as a dogmatic hermeneutical principle of some kind.

> *sary for all in order to salvation, are taught in Scripture in clear and perspicuous language, of which a brief summary* is contained in the Apostles' Creed. [Italics mine] Nothing is ever to be broached in the interpretation of Scripture that conflicts with this rule of faith; and hence if we are not exactly able at all times to ascertain the precise sense of any passage. . . we should nevertheless beware of proposing anything that is contrary to the analogy of faith.[1]

J. P. Koehler's "Analogy of Faith" then protests a tradition which stood at the very center of what he saw as the captivity of exegesis to dogmatics. Thus, too, it was an attack against traditionalism in the Church,[2] and tried to cut the ground out from under the Biblical premise on which so much of Lutheran orthodoxy had been built.

Koehler's first effort is to illustrate that there was no warrant whatsoever for using the specific passage in Romans as a rule of some kind for hermeneutics. The passage is concerned with nothing of this kind but simply states that the Christian should exercise the particular gifts he has as a believing member of the Body of Christ, the Church. The passage then does not even deal "with something which might furnish a parallel to a rule of interpretation."[3]

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[1] Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology*, pp. 76-77. Both sides in the intersynodical conferences were in substantial agreement with what the Gerhard statement represents. Thus it becomes Koehler's task to attack this whole tradition of the "analogy of faith."

[2] "Analogy of Faith," XXIV (October, 1951), p. 5.

[3] *Ibid*., p. 7.

Koehler then goes on to a lengthy and somewhat unsatisfactory study of the exegesis of Christ and the Apostles in an attempt to show that they knew nothing about any dogmatical control for exegesis.[1] He does, however, in that discussion manifest a historical approach to Scripture that is distinctly different from the tradition of Lutheran orthodoxy and this difference has particular significance in our study, since Koehler is careful again to avoid reading Scripture dogmatically. That is, the novel aspect of Koehler's approach comes out in his treatment of New Testament quotations from the Old Testament. He uses numerous examples but typical in his treatment of Christ's proclamation of resurrection by means of quoting the Old Testament word of Jacob, "I am the God of Abraham, etc.," Koehler says that "we have to acknowledge that it is not the purpose of these words in the Old Testament to proclaim this doctrine."[2] That means that such quotations do not scientifically explain what the originals meant in their situations but appear in the New Testament to give force to the proclamation and to point to the Gospel as being the ultimate meaning of all of Scripture.[3] At this point Koehler has sharply broken with his tradition. He treats Scripture historically and sees a progressive development. For Franz Pieper, on the other hand, Scripture is essentially a static storehouse of timeless propositional truths, and Christ's quotation of the word to Jacob simply demonstrates that "resurrection", like "justification by faith" (both as explicit doctrines) has always been taught and believed.[1] In such an approach Scripture becomes the demonstration of the timeless doctrinal system identified with the "analogy of faith."

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[1] Ibid., XXV (February, 1952), pp. 1, 14-16.

[2] Ibid., p. 15.

[3] Ibid.

Koehler attacks also the orthodox but erroneous treatment of a passage that had long been considered analogous to Romans 12:6. In 2 Timothy 1:13, St. Paul says, "Follow the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus." Here Koehler says there is no reference to a summary of doctrine and certainly not to "a brief digest which Paul supposedly gave Timothy orally or even in writing."[2] Rather Paul tells Timothy to be true to the Gospel as the good news of God in Christ. Neither is there "any direction for what might be called scientific exegesis in accord with the analogy of faith."[1]

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[1] Christian Dogmatics, III, pp. 534-535. "The Christian faith is as ancient as the first promise of Christ, Genesis 3: 15." Any concept that resurrection faith was a gradual development "reveals a poor understanding of the Old Testament Scriptures and directly contradicts Christ Himself." Ibid., p. 536.

[2] "Analogy of Faith," XXV (February, 1952), p. 16.

What was Koehler's most controversial point is developed in his discussion of the "*regula fidei*" (the "rule of faith"). Behind the expression "rule of faith" thus invariably lay a particular interpretation of the Greek word *pistis* (faith) in the New Testament. It had been maintained throughout most of the tradition of Western Christendom that *pistis* in the New Testament was used both *subjectively* and *objectively*. Subjectively it refers to the *trust by means of which a person believes a thing* ("*fides qua creditur*"). Thus, for instance, in Romans 3:28, "A man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law." Objectively faith was held to refer to *that which is believed* ("*fides quae creditur*"). A sort of compendium of doctrine then is meant. Since any use of "analogy of faith" depends precisely on the point that such passages as Romans 12:6 and I Timothy 1:13 use faith objectively, Koehler not only asserts that in both these passages faith is used subjectively but goes on to assert that this is always the New Testament use.[2] Koehler's point, of course, is to emphasize that the New Testament as such is really not concerned about a doctrinal system, but about the announcement of God's acts in behalf of man's redemption. Paul was not a dogmatician but a preacher.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.* The idea that Paul gave out some kind of summary of doctrine to Timothy was evidently the position of Pieper. See his discussion of "Holy Scripture and Exegesis." *Christian Dogmatics*, I, pp. 359-367.

[2] It had been assumed that such an understanding is impossible in some places, as in Galatians 3:23-25. A good section of Koehler's essay is devoted to a study of the passages

The entire tradition of an objective use of faith lay behind the "regula fidei," at least, as that expression developed. This paved the way for the slighting of exegetical work in the preoccupation with a doctrinal position. Among other things, this also caused exegesis to proceed atomistically and non-historically, since passages were used largely as proofs for doctrinal theses that constituted the separate parts of the doctrinal edifice that had been constructed. Already in the ancient Church this began to develop and to develop quite naturally. As early as the third century Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria were speaking of the "regula fidei," although the stress was still on faith rather than rule.[2] Then the North Africans and Romans, who were gifted

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usually taken as referring to objective faith. "Analogy of Faith," XXIV (November, 1951), pp. 15-16. Koehler probably is protesting too hard, especially with the late passage in Jude 1:13, "The faith once delivered to the saints."

[1] Ibid., XXV (February, 1952), p. 15.

[2] Ibid., XXV (March, 1952), p. 12.

in neither exegetical nor speculative directions, in their "practical nature" needed and emphasized correct "church doctrine."[1] The great St. Augustine (for Koehler, as for Luther, the greatest of the church fathers) was not an exegete either but had mainly a dogmatic-polemical interest. He then needed the authoritative "church doctrine" and helped firmly to establish in the West the wrong idea of the "analogy of faith," which became then authoritative for the Middle Ages and in a somewhat different form lived on in the Lutheran development.

After the Reformation the Lutheran dogmaticians discarded with vehemence "*regula fidei*" in the sense of the doctrine of an infallible church. They did not, however, drop what was behind it, the adherence to a simple, fixed, and coherent doctrinal system. And thus Koehler says that by the seventeenth century and culminating in Johann Gerhard, the stress was again on the "*regula fidei*," making "the doctrine of the church under the name of analogy the norm of interpretation."[2] By this time the confessional writings and the fathers were the chief sources; dogmatical development was practiced instead of real exegesis, and the analogy of faith took the place of clear wording even more so than in the early Church (where things were more fluid), and certainly more so than in the period of Luther.[1]

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[1] *Ibid*.

[2] *Ibid*., XXV (April, 1952), p. 11.

> In Greek _kat_ _analogia_ has prepositional force, like our "according to." The early church, through its concept of _regula_ _fidei_ with which _analogia_ (Rom. 12:6) later became synonymous, made of _analogia_ a concrete term. . . . Even when the teaching of the church was meant, the emphasis lay on _fidei_ and _regula_ expressed only the manner of its use. With Luther, too, the emphasis lay on _fidei_. But here in the seventeenth century _analogia_ receives the stress. In Gerhard's hands it becomes a dogmatical control which, according to a faulty interpretation, was found in the hypotyposis of 2 Tim. 1:13.[2]

All this seriously crippled exegetical study. And, when in the nineteenth century there was some reaction against this stress on an abstract doctrinal system and the "analogy of faith" became in some circles tied up with an appeal to the "whole of Scripture" ("die ganze Schrift"), that was not necessarily any better. That is, in the intersynodical conferences the Iowa Synod people especially made some appeal to the "analogy of faith" in this sense.[1] The idea had apparently been adopted from the work of J. C. K. von Hofmann, professor from 1845 to 1877, at the University of Erlangen.[2]

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[1] _Ibid_., p. 10.

[2] _Ibid_., p. 11.

One might have expected Koehler to be basically in agreement with von Hofmann. It is true that Koehler regarded von Hofmann as very significant. Von Hofmann's position that Scripture must be interpreted by Scripture was, according to Koehler, correct, and his emphasis upon its study as a coherent whole and as a history of salvation (Heilsgeschichte) rather than as an instruction manual in doctrine was an important step forward.[3] However, von Hofmann's operation with die ganze Schrift principle also had a side to it that made it easy to do just what von Hofmann objected to; that is, to overlook the immediate context and meaning of the text in favor of some greater whole which could be treated as though it were the "analogy of faith." Thus like the concept of a body of doctrine on the orthodox side, this method, too, could be used as an external criterion to be superimposed on particular passages of Scripture in a way so as to unwittingly determine what the specific texts could say. In this procedure, too, then "language and history are subjected to a mighty process of forcing the meaning (Konstruktionsverfahren)."[1]

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[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XV (September, 1942), pp. 9-10.

[2] Von Hofmann's hermeneutics are articulated in his Interpreting the Bible. Translated from the German by C. K. Preus (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1959). Both Koehler and von Hofmann reacted against the same type of exegetical study. Thus von Hofmann was opposed to what has been aptly called "the unprincipled rummaging of Hengstenberg." There, as in Franz Pieper, was the cultivation of an unhistorical prooftext methodology. See Paul Leo, "Revelation and History in J. C. K. von Hofmann," Lutheran Quarterly, (August, 1958), pp. 195-216.

[3] "Analogy of Faith," XXV (April, 1952), p. 11.

Koehler wants to protest any principle which involves a forcing of meaning or any special pleading. He wants rather the common sense understanding to be used in Biblical exegesis just as in the interpretation of any other literature. Hermeneutically he wants exegesis to "return to the simplicity of the method as it is found in the self-evident, unbiased, general art of interpretation which everyone applies when he hears or reads another's words."[2] Not a "key" to the Scripture but "clear wording" must be cultivated.

> A passage is clear to me if I know what the words wish to say in their grammatical and historical sense and in the context of the passage. This is clear wording. For this it is not necessary that the logical and theor-

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[1] Ibid., p. 12.

[2] Ibid., XXV (February, 1952), p. 1.

> etical connection with other passages is clear to me as far as there is a system of thought. For if this were the meaning one would have to surrender claim to all communication.
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> A passage or a group of passages may be clear in their wording, and yet an obscurity may remain insofar as I am not able to bring them into agreement with others. This is, e.g., the case with the passages with which a century ago the rationalists concerned themselves. . . . And as far as this is the case, the exegete has nothing to do with it. The apologete may attempt solution. . . . However, I have no right in this case to call one passage clear or obscure, in contrast with another. . . . The wording may be clear in both cases.[1]
>
> *Biblical hermeneutics are nothing but the application of the natural art of interpretation to Holy Writ* [italics mine] . The laws of understanding must be applied to the words of Scripture exactly as to all other words and are practiced by the unbiased, simple man just as by the scholar. For this we must understand that in the interpretation of Scripture no other principles prevail than those which every intelligent person uses when hearing or reading any word of man.[2]

Whether or not Koehler's own position on hermeneutics is fully satisfactory is not as important for our study as to emphasize his criticism of dogmatic exegesis as he saw it practiced. His primary protest is against exegesis that is preoccupied with creating a system whether that be a neat doctrinal scheme or the appeal to some "whole of Scripture." And he wants to allow no method which by an indiscriminate use of the "analogy of faith" principle in the attempt to explain "the mysteries of the Bible truth had served to emasculate some of its most vital teachings, e.g., the doctrine of election."[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, XXV (January, 1952), p. 13.

[2] *Ibid.*, XXV (May, 1952), p. 10.

The fact that Koehler's findings were not to the satisfaction of either of the groups in the intersynodical conferences is indicated by the fact that the article received sharp attack, including a formal protest, later ambiguously withdrawn, from the Faculty at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis.[2] This is interesting in view of the fact that while Koehler was defending the Missourians in their doctrine of Election, he was suspected by them of theological unsoundness for objecting to their general theological method.

> Hoenecke called his colleague's attention to the fact that the article was in conflict with the practically unanimous opinion of the dogmaticians regarding the use

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[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XV (September, 1942), p. 9.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

> of two vital concepts of Scripture: pistis (faith) and charis (grace). . . . Dr. Franz Pieper told two mutual friends that Koehler had struck out along a dangerous path with his article. . . . When Koehler was introduced to Professor [F. A.] Schmidt in Detroit, the United Norwegian spokesman [an "intuitu fidei" man] asked him whether he was the author of the article on the analogy of faith. The affirmative answer elicited no further comment than the cryptic: "Well--so you wrote that!"

In concluding our discussion of Koehler's "Analogy of Faith," there are at least three things that ought to be clarified: (1) Koehler's demand for exegetical objectivity; (2) his emphasis upon "clear wording"; and (3) his highly critical and, in effect, almost iconoclastic attitude toward dogmatics.

(1) When Koehler asks for a hermeneutical methodology that attempts to divorce exegesis from dogmatic presuppositions, he is not so naive as to believe that such a thing as a completely presuppositionless approach is either possible or desirable. He knows very well that no person is ever able to divorce himself from his environment or tradition. In fact, just because he believes that everything a man thinks and believes is bound up with that man's whole personality he so sharply attacks what he regards as the myth of

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[1] *Ibid*.

impersonal objectivity.[1] In his attack on intellectualism and in his conviction that what a man loves, hates, wants and does not want, etc., are to a large extent conditioned for better or worse by influences over which his intellect has little control, Koehler, in fact, inclines toward a determinism that leads to exactly the opposite from any believe in pure objectivity.

Furthermore, he does not believe that pure objectivity is even desirable. The interpreter as a believer is doing his work in the Church and in the service of the Church. As such he is not a tabula rasa but is with his whole being involved in the life of faith grounded in the objective message of God's grace. The believer never, so to speak, steps out of his baptismal covenant. This is what Koehler means by the recognition of a valid sense in which to speak of the "regula fidei", and this is why he defends the original meaning of that expression regardless of its danger and what it tended to develop into.[2]

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[1] Ibid., XI (February, 1938), p. 6.

[2] "Analogy of Faith," XXV (March, 1952), pp. 12-13. Koehler would seem to be correct, too, in his historical analysis of the term "regula fidei." "It has recently been shown that this regula fidei, this rule of faith, as used by Ireneus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria, is not to be understood as the rule for faith as it would later be interpreted to mean

(2) Koehler's insistence upon "clear wording," his insistence that the exegete simply studies the words of the text, and his emphatic repudiation of an "analogy of faith" might appear as a rationale for literalism. In point of fact, he protested any method which might tend toward literalism. Thus he voiced his appreciation of F. A. G. Tholuck's principle that the sense of a passage must sometimes be derived not from the verbalized expression itself, not by pressing the Wortlaut, but by an interpretation of the words according to the sense.[1] More precisely, he states that one must always, and especially in controversy, strive to get at what the other person intends with his perhaps unsatisfactory words.

> This must be observed above all. . . . Fairness demands that we seek to understand our opponent not as his words can or even must be understood, but as he wants them to be understood.[2]

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in the phrase: 'The Church is the rule for (of) faith.' The regula fidei is the rule constituted by faith or truth: the historical facts of God's action in creation and redemption." Heike A. Oberman, "Quo Vadis? Tradition from Irenaeus to Humani Generis," Scottish Journal of Theology, XVI (September, 1963), p. 229.

[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XV (October, 1942), p. 11. For an emphatic protest against any such approach, see Pieper, Christian Dogmatics, I, p. 72.

[2] "Analogy of Faith," XXV (May, 1952), p. 11.

Almost 25 years later, Koehler was to apply this principle to the controversial Beitz Paper and thereby, too, led to his own repudiation and ousting from the Wisconsin Synod.

(3) In spite of all Koehler's protestations to the contrary and his expressions of appreciation for dogmatics properly treated, one has the distinct impression that he was not convinced that there was such a thing as a dogmatician who understood his limitations. Koehler says that he is only asking that dogmatics respect, take seriously, and learn from the historical-exegetical disciplines.[1] Yet one must concede that at least the effect of his influence was to make dogmatics appear quite unimportant and, at worst, as a mischief-maker.[2] Nor is there any doubt but that during Koehler's tenure at Wauwatosa dogmatics became quite unpopular.[3] It is also true that Koehler, since he was well acquainted with some dogmatic works not written in tradition

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[1] Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte, p. vi.

[2] Thus Karl Koehler comes close to denying any positive value to dogmatics. See his, "Our Master Mission," Faith-Life, IV (April, 1931), p. 8.

[3] I. P. Frey, "Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 1863-1963," Theologische Quartalschrift, LX (July, 1963), p. 211. Almost the entire July issue was devoted to Frey's history of the Seminary. It constitutes what is by all odds the most complete and authoritative history of the Seminary and is, for a Wisconsin Synod publication, remarkably candid about the Wauwatosa Theology.

of Lutheran orthodoxy, should have realized that dogmatics _need_ not become what it had become in his tradition. Yet, he acts as though the Lutheran development was typical and perhaps even inevitable.

Koehler's application of the methods upheld in his "Analogy of Faith" is apparent in all his exegetical work. Coupled with this exegetical methodology is his insistence upon historical study and consciousness. Biblical truth is always historically formulated in the empirical life of the Church. And even when one is following theoretically correct methodology he is conditioned by presuppositions that have developed historically. Only with difficulty can one separate the essence of a thing from the historical form in which it has found its expression. Thus form and content are inevitably wedded together. In this there is always the tendency to absolutize and superimpose on Scripture what have merely been historical developments, forms of life or doctrinal viewpoints which have come about as a result of life in particular periods and subjected to particular forces.[1]

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[1] As, for instance, the changes that had come over the concept of the "_regula fidei_" through the centuries. More obvious might be the separation of Church and state which came to the American church historically and evidently to a large extent through non-Christian sources. To read such a doctrine back into Scripture is bad exegesis and historical naivete. Yet, Lutheran literature is replete with instances of this fallacy. See, for instance, Theo. Hoyer, "Church and State," in _The Abiding Word_ (St. Louis: Concordia, 1947), II, pp. 562-607.

All this is illustrated by Koehler's position in regard to the doctrine of the *Church and Ministry* (*Kirche und Amt*), where he maintained that what had developed historically as to church form was superimposed on Scripture and Scripture read to prove the historical development.

That the doctrine concerning the *Church*, and more especially the *Ministry*, should have come into conflict in the American Lutheran Church is not surprising. That the subject should have especially interested the synods of the Synodical Conference is only natural, too, in view of the fact that the Missouri Synod had been in sharp conflict with J. A. A. Grabau and his Buffalo Synod, as well as with the Iowa Synod people, who had been influenced by the somewhat high church views of Wilhelm Loehe.

Grabau had views of the *Ministry* which put strong emphasis upon ordination and ministerial authority. His views appeared to C. F. W. Walther, especially in view of the case of Martin Stephan and Walther's experiences with him,[1] as a denial of the universal priesthood of believers and as a Romanizing error. The Buffalo position on the *Church* was likewise objected to as an externalization of the *Church*.

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[1] For a thorough study of the "Stephanite crisis", as well as the views of Stephan, see Forster's *Zion on the Mississippi*.

The Iowans took a position somewhere between Buffalo and Missouri, but they, too, were more hierarchical than was consistent with Missourian views. Missouri doctrine held that the office of the Ministry was given to the Church and that the congregation (which is the important group) delegates authority to the pastor in order that he may function in behalf of and in the name of the congregation. Thus the "transfer of office" theory of Missouri. Ordination is only a form which consists essentially of a first installation (which accounts for Missouri's practice of ordaining a candidate in the parish to which he has been called.) All this was not to the liking of the Iowans, who contended that the pastor receives his office directly through Christ, and that ordination has a certain significance even aside from the call to the parish. Walther founded Lehre und Wehre to present his views and to battle especially Buffalo.[1]

However, there were also other problems which later led to unclarity. There was, for instance, the Cincinnati Case, which caused trouble between the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods and raised questions regarding the validity of synodical discipline and suspension.[2] In general, Missouri made much of the local congregation in distinction from the "purely human" agency of a synod, and was thus vigorously congregational. In regard to the Ministry, Missouri spoke of "auxiliary offices."[1] There was also a problem because of the policy of both Missouri and Wisconsin in establishing parochial schools with permanently-called male teachers operating under divine call. Just what was this latter office? Or, what was the office of the seminary professor or of the missionary without an organized parish or of the chaplain who serves no local congregation? Were these offices derived from the divinely established pastorate (Pfarramt) and thus divine?[2] What is the nature of a synod? Does it exist by divine commandment or by mere human expediency? Wherein does synodical discipline differ from congregational discipline? Were the forms of the local congregation commanded by God, or did both synod and local congregation develop historically in keeping with Christian freedom?

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[1] Koehler, Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte, p. 663. See also Wentz, p. 210.

[2] For a very full discussion of the Missourian position on Church and Ministry, see John Fritz, Pastoral Theology, pp. 24-59, 232-256. Study might profitably be made of the extent to which Missouri's doctrine was an adaptation to the American environment of the period.

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[1] For a discussion of this and the sense in which it forced the Wauwatosa men to restudy Church and Ministry, see "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XVI (May, 1943), pp. 6-9. For a more polemical treatment see M. A. Zimmermann, "The Wauwatosa Controversy, 1904-1916," Faith-Life, XIII (February, 1940), pp. 3-9.

[2] Missouri, in spite of its concept of the "transfer of office," its extreme low-church views, and an approach that makes it sometimes appear as though only "decency and order" were behind the office of the Ministry, did find a special command for the establishment of the pastoral office. Fritz, pp. 28-32.

J. P. Koehler was firmly attracted to Walther's emphasis upon the Priesthood of Believers and to Walther's firm opposition to all "Romanizing" theories in regard to the Church and Ministry. However, Koehler's New Testament studies, along with his historical study of the development of the outward life and form of the Church, convinced him that Walther had not precisely caught the significance of the New Testament motif at the same time as he had tended to absolutize a certain historical development. That is, Walther's views were in error in that they assumed a divine imperative for a specific form of church polity, in contrast to Koehler's typical insistence that "the Gospel creates its own forms" (Das Evangelium schafft seine eigenen Formen.)[1] Koehler claims, too, that the New Testmanet does not know the pastoral office at all in the exact form in which it developed historically.

> Walther identified the pastoral office ("Pfarramt") with the preaching office ("Predigtamt"), and gives greater authority to the local congregation than to other ecclesiastical forms, since he found for the pastorate aspecial divine institution. The Wauwatosa Faculty maintains that

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[1] Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte, p. 712.

> the pastorate is simply a species of the general preaching ministry and that it originated as we know it in Germany in the Middle Ages. Likewise, the local congregation is a species of the concept of the church. In both cases, with the term *institution* is meant any divine creation of forms (pastorate, local congregation, synod, office of school teacher, professor, etc.) through the working of the Holy Spirit in Christendom in which, with Christian freedom, Christians under the Gospel and by faith organize these things as suited to the external conditions and the needs of their circumstances. No external forms as such have special divine command.[1]

Koehler here then sharply articulates a view which both protests the idea that the Gospel as such has to do with commanding forms of any kind, and which is in keeping with the implications of the traditional Lutheran view that all matters of form and polity are essentially in the realm of adiaphora. What is essential is that the Word be preached and the Sacraments administered. The form in which this is done will vary and ought to vary in accordance with historical need.

The general position against which Koehler, with the full support of both Schaller and A. Pieper, protested was general in the Wisconsin Synod, which had taken over Walther's views but often, apparently, without Walther's high appreciation for the Priesthood of Believers. After the Wauwatosa men began to express their new views a good deal of agitation developed. The traditional Wisconsin Synod viewpoint found rather polemical expression in an eight-page pamphlet written by Professor A. F. Ernst of Northwestern College in 1911, and given circulation as an overt challenge to the Wauwatosa men.[1] The pamphlet consisted of a discussion of 16 theses setting forth the Missourian conception in rather extreme form. Among other things, it was maintained that only the local congregation is by divine command and that all other groupings, such as synods, are of purely human institution.

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[1] *Ibid*., The writer's translation.

J. P. Koehler's position was that no form is divinely commanded for all times and under all circumstances, This position was simply an expression of his basic view that the New Testament Church lives by faith rather than law. The form develops naturally as men live, worship, and work together. The need for external form and order lies in the organic nature of the Church as a community. What form develops is of little moment as long as truth is proclaimed and the life of faith can flourish. But since our society tends to be locally established (in contrast, for instance, to nomadic societies) it is only natural (and this is seen, too, in the life of the early Church as pictured in the Book of Acts) that more or less permanent groups of Christians at localized places gather together into Christian congregations. Although the parish system as we know it was a creation of the eighth century, that does not mean for Koehler that it was not a divine institution. It most emphatically was of divine institution insofar as it was created by the Gospel. But other arrangements, too, are of divine institution in the same sense. When, thus, groups of individual congregations bind themselves together into a synod, that also is a divine institution. Neither group, congregation, or synod, exists by law but both groups properly exist insofar as they grow out of faith. So, too, one is not to look for laws in the New Testament that would order for all time any external pattern or polity, and such things as congregationalism, episcopalianism, presbyterianism, etc., are none of them commanded nor forbidden as such. The important thing is the proclamation of the Gospel, the administration of the Sacraments, and the cultivation of the life of faith among the people of God. Form is always secondary and in itself unimportant. Juridical preoccupation with rights and prerogatives, of who can excommunicate and absolve, these and other like questions arise only when the life of faith is corrupted. But to assume that in keeping with the Jewish synagogue organization, the Lord in Matthew 18, commanded the founding of local congregations and thus made a rule for all time of such a form is poor exegesis and history, to say the least. More seriously, it is an indication of legalistic thinking.[1]

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[1] The pamphlet is not in print and the writer has been unable to locate a copy. The theses of the pamphlet are reprinted, along with a discussion of them, in the "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XVI (June, 1943), p. 11. The pamphlet itself was refuted by the chief spokesman for the new view of the Wauwatosa Theology, August Pieper, and appeared as "Die Suspension noch Einmal," Theologische Quartalschrift, VIII (July, 1911), pp. 131-164.

In the case of the Ministry, too, the Lord has only commissioned the Church to proclaim the Gospel. This activity calls forth the ministry as a public office, but that this ministry already in the New Testament church took several forms is obvious from Ephesians 4:11. That a public ministry is anticipated and taken for granted is also clear from the fact that requirements are laid down in I Timothy 3, for those who would exercise the public ministry. All this, however, does not mean any legal command and certainly not a command for the pastorate in the parish system that developed historically. Nor does it mean the pastorate as over against other forms of public ministry. To speak of "auxiliary offices" is out of place. There is no clerical office either, in the sense that the clergy is set apart from the laity except in the sense that the clergy is called to do publicly and in behalf of the whole community of faith what the Church as such is called to do (essentially what Walther, too, had maintained as over against, for instance, the Buffalo Synod.) The highest call in the Christian Church is the call to be a disciple. In this call every believer is a king and priest before God and in full possession of all the gifts given to the Church. No priestly office exists and all priestly views of the Ministry are flatly rejected.[1]

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[1] "Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns," translated by A. Hillmer, Faith-Life, XXV (October, 1952), pp. 10-11. In general it may be said that Koehler was relatively satisfied with the practice of congregationalism as formulated by the Missourians. He was not at all interested, for instance, in giving greater authority to a synod (August Pieper does seem to have had such interests). Primarily he was interested in stressing the freedom of faith to create its own forms and in protesting the absolutizing of any historically developed forms.

On both Church and Ministry then Koehler is concerned to assert the freedom of the Gospel as against any compulsion of law.

The present-day distinction between the

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[1] Except for his emphasis upon doing all things "decently and in order" Koehler might appear, at least on this issue, as an extreme low-churchman. In matters of liturgy, hymnology, appreciation for the church year, and respect for old traditions, he was conservative and in a sense would appear as a high-churchman. In his old age he became quite critical, however, of the liturgical movement that he read about in the literature of certain American Lutheran groups in the 1930's. Much of this latter he regarded as formalistic and archaic, i.e., the attempt to reintroduce forms that had developed

> local congregation (Ortsgemeinde) and the synod has no place in the Lord's discourse at Matthew 18. Even though the distinction between ekklesia (congregation) and ekklesia megalae (large congregation) may be found in the Old Testament, that is not the same distinction as between our local congregation and the synod. Nor is the distinction between the "churches" of Matthew 16 and Matthew 18. At Matthew 16 "His church" is the entire communion of saints that inherit the Kingdom, at Matthew 18 "the church" is the body of believers here on earth immediately concerned, whether local congregation or synod. Moreover, the contention regarding the present distinction between local congregation and synod, to wit: that the former has the purpose of spiritual edification, the latter of outward business [exactly the Missourian distinction] is a fallacy, notwithstanding what synodical constitutions and quotations from the fathers, early and late, may say.
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> The Lord's command is not the creation of a certain office either, attached to certain ordained persons or a distinct clerical order, or of any specified forms. The ministry, as a matter of New Testament freedom, is no longer tied to the Old Testament ceremonial law. . . . It means that the Christians are free do organize and carry on their ministry according to the moral values that are inherent in the concept of fellowship that is sanctified by communion with our Lord and Savior.[1]

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historically and then historically, too, had died out. See his "Liturgical Comments," Faith-Life, XI (September, 1938), pp. 15-16.

[1] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XVI (June, 1943), p. 10.

In concluding this quite brief discussion of the Church and Ministry it should be noted, as previously stated, that Koehler met with more acceptance within his own Synod on this issue than was true of his testimony otherwise. That is, there is a well-recognized "Wisconsin Synod doctrine" on this issue that at least formally would appear to agree with Koehler's position. The Theologische Quartalschrift has over the years devoted considerable space to the articulation of this view. Especially between the years 1910 and 1920, there were numerous Quartalschrift essays on the subject, most of them written by August Pieper, who certainly became the popularizer and formulator of what is now known as the "Wisconsin Synod doctrine." Even in recent years discussions of the subject have been frequent."[1] Nevertheless, it is this writer's conviction that even here Koehler was not really understood, that his position instead of being understood as a testimony for evangelical freedom, often was given a dangerous legalistic emphasis in that it was used to defend the exercise by the Synod of powers which before that time had been exercised only by

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[1] The best discussion of the subject which the writer has seen is that of Theodore Hartwig, Church and Ministry in the Light of Timothy 1:3. This was read as an essay at the Minnesota District Pastoral Conference of the Wisconsin Synod, at Morgan, Minnesota, April 11-12, 1961. The essay is not published but is available from the author.

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the local congregation. What was meant as a protest against all legalistic externalism was used to support, in effect, the right of the Synod also to excommunicate.[1]

The writer would also feel that, at least in the context of what we are concerned with in this study, the question of the adequacy of Koehler's views on the Church and Ministry is relatively unimportant. The important thing to see is Koehler's attempt to examine an issue historically and his concern to emphasize evangelical freedom in the matter of the Church's ordering of its life.

It has been thus far maintained that the particular stress of J. P. Koehler and the Wauwatosa Theology was upon the historical-exegetical approach to theology. The "Analogy of Faith" was used, then, to illustrate what Koehler had in mind hermeneutically, while the Church and Ministry discussion was meant to illustrate the application of this exegetical method coupled with historical examination to one concrete issue. It was also true of both Koehler and August Pieper that they insisted that the Church must always be concerned with self-analysis.[1] Koehler as a historian made an earnest and conscious attempt to read all church history in the light of the dichotomy between Law and Gospel. He was well aware, too, of the great gulf that may lie between profession and practice and that the formal creed may have very little to do with the actual life and faith of a group. Embodied in all Koehler's historical work was a strong emphasis upon self-analysis and self-criticism. He had, for instance, a strong loyalty to Lutheranism, the Synodical Conference (including a very deep appreciation of Walther,[2] in spite of his frequent criticism of the influence of Walther upon his disciples), and to his own Wisconsin Synod, but his loyalty was to a rather remarkable degree open to see the defects in his group and denomination and he was almost entirely lacking in any traces of synodical chauvinism.[1] The life of the Church must continually be subjected to thorough analysis.[2] There must be a conscious effort to cut through surface manifestations in order to seek to understand the influences that are actually molding the essential character of a group.

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[1] This is a serious charge, but it must be noted that the ousting of about 40 Protestants from the Wisconsin Synod was originally meant as excommunication. The evidence for this is quite clear. See, for instance, Gerhard Pieper's official letter to the congregation at Wilton, Wisconsin, reading it out of the Christian Church. Faith-Life, III (September, 1930), p. 11.

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[1] Mention has already been made of August Pieper as a critic of the empirical life of the church. A rather typical example of Pieper in this role is his "Jubilaeumsnachgedanken," Theologische Quartalschrift, XX (January, April, July, October, 1923), pp. 1-18, 88-112, 161-177, 254-270. The writer does not mean to say, by his neglect of August Pieper in the context of this chapter, that his critical analyses were valueless. However, Pieper was no historian and his criticisms were primarily spontaneous reactions to what he saw and did not like. Koehler, on the other hand, had much broader interests and a profound historical awareness. He saw then throughout the history of the church the tendency toward legalistic perversion even when the intent was sound and the form of doctrine correct.

[2] "Die Synodalkonferenz in der Geschichte der Amerikanische-Lutherischen Kirche," Theologische Quartalschrift, XIX (July, 1922), pp. 161-181.

This critical attitude frequently got Koehler into trouble. Although he avoided petty gossip or a discussion of personalities his critical analyses were not always welcomed. One example of this will perhaps suffice. In 1908, The Synodical Conference met at New Ulm, Minnesota. The essayist was Professor Franz Pieper, who read a paper on the precariousness of true unity enlarged on the disturbances to such unity as they come from the Romanists, the Reformed, the General Synod, the Iowa and Ohio Synods, and the heterodox in general. Koehler disliked this habit of seeing the evils on the outside instead of seeing that judgment must begin from within. He thus commented on church politics and the "party spirit" within their own midst as a more immediate disturbance to what the New Testament means by unity. Astonishment was expressed at the thought that such things were actually going on. Koehler then pointed out that much happens within all organized groups that is inspired by the "party spirit" and is always motivated by lack of faith and love. Pure doctrine is no guarantee against this and may, in fact, act as a soporific. The analysis "was illustrated by actual facts presented impersonally." It was objected that to say such things are commonplace within the group was equivalent to judging hearts. It was then moved and passed that Koehler's remarks not be recorded in the minutes. "What the writer did not know until the report appeared in print was that the Eastern Synods had, at the same meeting, been charged with the same kind of politics to which he had reference (but at which they were not quite so crude.) The charge against outsiders was not suppressed.[1]

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[1] This comes out perhaps best in his "Die Heiligung Geschieht Nicht mit Hurra," Theologische Quartalschrift, XVII (October, 1920), pp. 279-305. The writer does not regard this as one of Koehler's better articles but is important at its best point, a protest against exaggerated patriotism to either church or state.

[2] "History of the Wisconsin Synod," XI (February, 1942), p. 8. This same theme runs throughout his controversial "Unser Schuld am Weltkrieg," Theologische Quartalschrift, XV (January, 1915), pp. 1-24. The second part of the essay never appeared in the Quartalschrift because it was too controversial. For this story, as well as the unpublished sections, see Faith-Life, VI (July, August, 1933), pp. 9-14, 7-9.

What Professor Koehler meant by legalism is illustrated by his "Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns."[2] This is also a documentation of his penetrating insights into the life of the Church under the factors of sin and grace, and of his deep ecumenical interest and perspective. That is, these same themes run also through his other work, for instance, his Lehrbuch. However, the "Gesetzlich Wesen" essay is of special interest here, since it is perhaps Koehler's best concrete application of his viewpoint to the particular situation which he saw confronting his own Wisconsin Synod. It is also true, however, that since Koehler was always interested in the direct application of general truths to particular situations, many of the things he says in this essay may appear to the modern reader from a different background as concern for trivialities or as a laboring of the obvious. Thus it is important both to appreciate the intention behind Koehler's analysis--his concern with the continual tendency toward legalism--as well as to set the essay within the context of a group which was self-consciously cultivating orthodox and conservative doctrine and practice.

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[1] Ibid., XV (November, 1942), pp. 15-16.

[2] References to the essay in this paper are to A. Hillmer's translation as that appeared in Faith-Life. The original ran in the Theologische Quartalschrift, XI (October, 1914), pp. 231-241; XII (January, April, July, 1915), pp. 24-42, 97-108, 147-169.

The essay had its genesis in some remarks made by Koehler at a pastoral conference, where his references to "Gesetzlich Wesen unter uns" were either not understood at all or understood as though Koehler must have reference to a lack of theoretical distinction between Law and Gospel.[1]

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[1] "Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns," Faith-Life, XXV (July, 1952), p. 9.

That is, there was a tendency to think that legalism could occur only where the doctrine of a group was unsound. Thus Koehler was forced to elaborate on his theme and narrow it down, so that it referred less to legalistic attitudes in general than to the particular way in which legalism could permeate a group with the background, make-up, and theological orientation of the Wisconsin Synod.[1]

Gesetzlich Wesen Koehler defines as consisting primarily in taking our motivation and forms of life from the Law rather than the Gospel, as living by rule rather than faith, by coercion rather than love.[2] All this, he says, proceeds from the flesh, from the natural nature of man, and to some extent permeates every act of the individual Christian as well as of the Christian group. All this has very little to do with formal doctrine. It has very little to do with confessing the doctrine of Justification by Faith. One might know well the whole orthodox Lutheran system of dogmatics with its vehement protest against work righteousness and yet be a legalist. Or one might--and this fallacy is pointed up by the trouble people had with Koehler's original remarks--be thoroughly acquainted with a text, such as Walther's famous Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel, or a pastor might carefully divide his sermons into Law first and Gospel secondly, or a pastor and congregation might follow sound practice as described in Walther's influential Amerikanische-Lutherische Pastoral Theologie or later in John Fritz' Pastoral Theology, and yet the actual life of the community might be essentially legalistic. And precisely the false idea that having the right theoretical profession and the right technique of distinguishing Law and Gospel somehow guarantees sound practice means that the sound profession has become a soporific.

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[1] Ibid., XXV (August, 1952), p. 9.

[2] Ibid., (July, 1952), p. 9.

> The activities growing out of faith, love, hope, quelling forth from a real, true, and living fountain, are for that reason original, forthright, naive and natural, real and true; the doings of legalism, on the other hand, are mechanical and formalistic, shallow, proceeding from ulterior and mixed motives, opportunistic, makeshift, spurious and untrue.[1]

But both these forms of activity are engaged in by the Christian and the Christian community since, "an element of sin insinuates itself in every manifestation of life, even together with faith, love, and hope."[2] And worst of all, the Christian is seldom aware of this paradoxical character of his action. In the corporate life of the Christian community the ambiguity is perhaps even more pervasive, taking different forms in different groups depending upon the orientation of the particular group. For Lutherans it is not so important to see how legalism permeates the life of other groups as to see how legalistic practices have developed and how they manifest themselves "among us and in our own midst."[1]

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[1] Ibid., p. 11.

[2] Ibid., p. 12.

> In the Lutheran Church this characteristic ["Gesetzlich Wesen"] manifests itself primarily in the noisy self-satisfied to-do about _pure doctrine_. Paralleling this is a clamorous insistence on _sanctification_ that exerts itself especially in church-government regulations. As a reaction, a fussy insistence on _sanctification_ develops that, as among the pietists, rebels against all external discipline in doctrine, but nevertheless makes its legalistic presence felt just as energetically by a consciousness of greater piety.[2]

The danger in the Wisconsin Synod, however, did not lie in the direction of pietism.

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[1] _Ibid._

[2] _Ibid._, p. 9.

> We [Lutherans] quite properly lay greater stress on doctrine, purity of doctrine. Legalism obtrudes itself here in the form of harping on orthodoxy (Pochen auf Rechtglauebigkeit). Hereby is meant the insistence on the "right faith" where the emphasis has shifted from "faith" to "right" . . . . This noisy ado about orthodoxy flourishes on petty parochialism which is opposed to the ecumenical spirit. For that reason it clings to the lees of the letter instead of living in the facts. The end result is traditionalism, which has lost the spirit of the language, the spirit of the gospel.[1]
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> The main emphasis is placed on the intellectual understanding instead of on the conquest of the innermost heart. . . . One wrestles with words instead of abiding in living issues. . . . A new law is laboriously fashioned for which intellectual asset is required.[2]

Interestingly, Koehler illustrates this legalistic intellectualism of doctrine from the concept of Verbal Inspiration.[3] It was felt that we could not get along without a clearly defined and intellectualized dogma clearly expressing Verbal Inspiration, and thus 2 Timothy 3:16 (among other passages) became a proof text for a particular theory of Inspiration with the end result that we become so involved in documenting the doctrine and defending it that we fail to grasp what the Scripture is pointing to, the great acts of God in history. These, and not the formulated doctrine, are the most impressive testimony to the sacred character of Scripture. "Being so bent on documenting the doctrine of the divine origin of Scripture in just so many words, we fail to see that what Caleb is carrying is the goodness of the Lord. . . . That I call being caught in the letter."[1] The Bible, as such, nowhere teaches a theory of Inspiration. The character of Scripture is its own witness to the man who has come to faith.

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[1] Ibid., (August, 1952), p. 9.

[2] Ibid., p. 10. In this context Koehler also discusses the dangers of the traditional "knowledge, assent, and confidence" formula of Lutheran orthodoxy.

[3] He also uses the "intuitu fidei" formulation to illustrate the same. The former, however, is much more interesting in view of Koehler's emphasis upon legalism "among us."

Our pure doctrine complex vitiates the ecumenicity of our evangelical proclamation. That, however, is also legalism which, in the interest of easy unity, manifests itself in a cavalier connivance at differences in doctrine and in a characterless readiness to make common cause with those who deny elements in the faith which are precious to one's tradition and convinced understanding of Scripture. One's lights may be dim but a Christian must be honest to them. This indifference to doctrine, however, was not, in Koehler's estimation, the threat in the Wisconsin Synod, which tended rather in the opposite direction.

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[1] Ibid., p. 10. In fairness, it ought to be stated that Koehler did believe in Verbal Inspiration. What he criticized was the preoccupation with the doctrine and the way it tended to be used. He was not in any sense a contemporary "neo-orthodoxist" on the subject even if he had an emphasis on the "acts of God" that was quite different from that, for instance, of Franz Pieper.

> Under ecumenicity of the evangelical proclamation, I understand this, that one nourishes the appreciation for the one true, invisible Church. . . . It consists in my rejoicing that another, whether from Jerusalem or Samaria, on the road to Damascus or at Athens, has come to faith. . . . To this I give expression by emphasizing those things that unite us. . . . It goes without saying, however, that evangelical sense does not sacrifice truthfulness. Therefore, criticism will not be ruled out, but it will be colored by the Gospel.[1]

Koehler's "History of the Wisconsin Synod" is overwhelming evidence that he highly appreciated the men who had been responsible for the development of high confessionalism within the Wisconsin Synod. It is documentation, too, that Koehler was in sympathy with the intentions of C. F. W. Walther and the Missouri Synod. At the same time, however, he points out how often the Confessions have been used in a way that contributes to legalism and parochialism rather than to the encouragement of an ecumenical spirit.

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[1] Ibid., (September, 1952), p. 11. Koehler tells there an interesting story of Walther to illustrate that Walther had more of the ecumenical spirit than many have credited him with and more than many of Walther's disciples whose "silly veneration for Walther often spoiled the joy."

> What is meant here is the party spirit that stresses the external crowd of confessionalists over against the other. When our doctrinal discussions are carried on in such a tone that we are out to show the other: you are wrong, your position is incorrect, ours is correct, when correcting holds the spotlight and the regard for the growth of the unifying bond of faith is crowded into the dim background, then. . .there is present an intermingling of law and gospel. . . . The dogged insistence on the correct dogma finally causes the controversy to degenerate into a quarrel over the externals of self-interest, that slights the ecumenical church, but guards the advantages of a certain external group.[1]

Exactly this, together with the lack of a proper historical-exegetical methodology, had helped to make futile the controversies and discussions among the Midwestern Lutheran synods, and had meant that no problem could be brought to any satisfactory conclusion. It meant, too, the growth of sectarianism among American Lutherans. All this led to "spiritual paralysis (Geistestarre)."[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[2] *Ibid.*

The article closes with a call to repentance and a request that the Synodical Conference Lutherans analyze all their life, critically, honestly, and boldly, from the perspective of the Lutheran confession that the Christian life is the life of faith and evangelical freedom. The proper grasp of this truth, correctly testified to in the doctrine of the Lutheran Church but too often only a dogma, may yet make for a correction of those attitudes and practices that have so hindered the development of a sound and healthy church life. The proper attitude will also contribute to a healthy ecumenical vision and will that avoids both the disastrous pitfalls of orthodoxism and pietism. "There is an approach which takes not, as it were, the middle road, but operates on a level completely different."[1]

> The spirit of our Christians will be introduced into challenging fields where its elasticity may be exercised, having become tired out and weakened by the old battles, which by themselves are incapable of furthering new thoughts. The Gospel brings new vigor, . . . it brings greater joy of faith, it will then, too, give the power to overcome the decay of spirituality of our time.[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, XXVI (January, 1953), p. 12.

[2] *Ibid.*, Although J. P. Koehler had, apparently, been almost forgotten by the Wisconsin Synod, for some reason that the writer cannot explain, the "Gesetzlich Wesen" essay, in its English translation, was read by Waldemar Gieschen at the convention of the Wisconsin Synod at Saginaw, Michigan, August 5-12, 1959. It is especially amazing

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that this particular essay should have been read. For a highly ambiguous response to it from a Wisconsin Synod pastor, see Reinhart Pope's letter of March 10, 1960, to the Editor of Faith-Life, and printed in that periodical, XXXIII (April, 1960), pp. 7, 16.

Chapter VI

THE PROTESTANT CONTROVERSY, THE REPUDIATION OF JOHN PHILIP KOEHLER, AND THE DEATH OF THE WAUWATOSA THEOLOGY

Considerable reference has been made to the *Wauwatosa Theology*. At the same time, the discussion in the previous chapters of this study implies that in at least one sense the writer would regard the whole idea that there was such a thing as a *Wauwatosa Theology*, with a distinct program and approach to theology, representing a peculiar school of thought, and characterizing the viewpoint and practice of a synodical group within Midwestern American Lutheranism during a certain clearly defined period of time as something of a myth. That is, what this writer would have to regard as the positive achievement of the so-called *Wauwatosa Theology* is ultimately identified not so much with a theological movement, not even with a triumvirate of men, as with one individual. This does not mean to say that Koehler's two colleagues, John Schaller and August Pieper, were unimportant, devoid of talent and imagination, or unaware of what Koehler was trying to say. Nor does the writer mean that there was no sense in which the Wisconsin Synod was different as a result of the *Wauwatosa Theology* from the other synods of its time and place. Certainly as far as the three Wauwatosa men were concerned, they were at least agreed in their negative attitude toward certain aspects of the tradition of Lutheran orthodoxy. Certainly, too, they were agreed, at least formally, in an emphasis upon a historical-exegetical approach to theological study. There can really be no doubt but that the Theologische Quartalschrift from its beginning to the middle 1920's, was in fact characterized by a motif that was quite different from what otherwise dominated the environment of the orthodox Lutheran synods in America.

At the same time, if it were not for John Philip Koehler, it would be hard to maintain any special historical significance for the Wauwatosa Theology. In the case of John Schaller, about the most that can be claimed is that he willingly accepted the new status assigned to dogmatics by Koehler and Pieper and was thus willing to take seriously the criticism of his two more talented colleagues toward the tendencies within the discipline of dogmatics. In addition, Schaller must be credited with the ability to serve as a balance wheel within the Faculty at Wauwatosa, so that as long as he was around the personality clashes that later made harmony between Koehler and Pieper impossible did not come to the fore. In the case of August Pieper, there is no question but that he served as a kind of popularizer of the Wauwatosa Theology, especially as a vigorous critic of "dead orthodoxy." We have also, however, called attention to a tendency toward both superficiality and extravagance in Pieper's work. There was, also, as in his presentation of Church and Ministry, a tendency toward legalism, in spite of Pieper's continuous polemic against legalism. In the end, the position which Pieper took over against Koehler and the issues which led to Koehler's ousting from the Seminary and Synod force one (unless one sees Pieper simply as a victim of jealousy and dislike for Koehler) to ask whether Pieper ever did understand either Koehler's hermeneutical principles or his analysis of "gesetzlich Wesen unter uns."[1]

It would appear that the most that can be said without overstating the case is that during a certain period of time (1900 to 1925) while the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary was located at Wauwatosa, there existed a situation that allowed John Philip Koehler the freedom to set forth and develop an approach to theology and church life that was quite different from what otherwise dominated the Midwestern Lutheran environment. During that same time Koehler happily found himself in association with colleagues who could appreciate and help to express at least something of what he had in mind. During that same period, too, and for whatever reasons, the Wisconsin Synod at least managed to tolerate Koehler within its midst. It would seem that what we have said here is as much as can be said without forcing the historical evidence to fit the presupposition that the Wauwatosa Theology was, as generally thought,[1] the achievement of three men who, representing the three traditional theological disciplines, worked together in a creative unity and thus "stood shoulder to shoulder as one man."[2] The evidence of the Theologische Quartalschrift, as well as the other writings of the three men concerned, would rather bear out the observation that in the final analysis, "Professor Koehler is the father of the Wauwatosa Theology; it stood and fell with him."[3]

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[1] The writer would at this point take issue also with the Protestants, who have consistently taken to position that Pieper experienced a metamorphosis. See, for example, Paul Hensel, The Wauwatosa Gospel (Marshfield, Wisconsin: Protestant Conference Press, 1928), pp. 69-85. Certainly Pieper underwent a radical change in his personal relationships with Koehler, but the writer believes there is good reason to suggest that in his criticism both of the Beitz Paper and of Koehler's interpretation of that he was acting in true form.

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[1] As an example of such a presupposition, on the Protestant side, see M. A. Zimmermann, "Our Present Synod Controversy," Faith-Life, XIII (April, 1940), pp. 3-7. On the Wisconsin Synod side, for the same presupposition, see I. P. Frey, "Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 1863-1963," pp. 208-218.

[2] Ibid., p. 218.

[3] Gerhard Ruediger, "Anent the Centennial," Faith-Life, XXIV (December, 1951), p. 12.

The evidence would indicate that in another sense, too, the Wauwatosa Theology is a myth. The writer can find very little to indicate that what J. P. Koehler had in mind ever did take any substantial root within the Wisconsin Synod. It is very doubtful whether there ever was a time when "the Wisconsin Synod was set as a city on a hill to be a light to the world and to the church at large."[1] Certainly the Wauwatosa Theology never created anything even approaching the influence on its own group of, for instance, the theology of C. F. W. Walther. It frequently happens in the history of the Church that a man or a group of men actually do develop an intellectual or theological point of view which they manage to pass on to their students or their contemporaries in a way that makes it possible to speak of a school of thought molding or influencing a group. The example of Walther is only a sharp and obvious illustration of this. That Koehler's way of seeing things was ever much understood by the rank and file of his students is doubtful.

There is no evidence, either, to indicate that the

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[1] M. A. Zimmermann, "Our Present Synod Controversy," Faith-Life, XIII (April, 1940), p. 7. Thus he believes that the Wisconsin Synod once had a peculiarity but renounced it. "The glory of the Lord, as it appeared in the old Wauwatosa days, has departed. And as for the Wisconsin Synod's power politics, its officialism, its dogmatism. . .this is not a peculiarity, but it is the common property of all synods and all churches, even of the sects. With the loss of its peculiarity it has lost its salt and its lease on life." Ibid.

Wisconsin Synod as such was even during the time of the *Wauwatosa Theology* so influenced that it stood for any well-defined position that made it unique among the synods of American Lutheranism. The very fact, as previously stated, that the *Protestant Controversy* could take the particular turn it took (regardless of the rightness or wrongness of the positions taken by the Protestants) and that Koehler could be repudiated in the way he was and, according to all outward indications at any rate, be so quickly forgotten,[1] would certainly imply that what Koehler represented was never grasped.

Perhaps it was inevitable that all this was so. Perhaps the type of thinking which dominated Koehler never can find any very fertile soil within an organized church where the practical problems of administration, expansion, synodical self-identity and loyalty, etc., demand a relatively

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The writer would ask whether it really was ever any different in any very profound sense.

[1] This is no exaggeration. That Koehler became a "forgotten man" is obvious as far as any official mention of him within the Wisconsin Synod after 1930 was concerned. Even his death went almost unnoticed. Only in very recent years, as, for instance, in I. Frey's history of the Seminary has Koehler been discussed. Even then no adequate treatment has been undertaken. And one needs only to examine the *Theologische Quartalschrift* before and after the latter 1920's, to discover the sharp transition in motif in that journal.

simple and clear-cut position and an unequivocal statement of right and wrong. Gerhard Ruediger's "Anent the Centennial", which ran for several issues in Faith-Life, represented, to be sure, an extremely polemical although colorful treatment of the repudiation of Koehler, as well as something of a romanticized idealization of the "old Wauwatosa days." At the same time, Ruediger may well be more right than wrong when he indicates that by its very nature the Wauwatosa Theology was doomed to failure.

> Wauwatosa was a forlorn past. . . . The challenge is to take nothing for granted, in this case in theology, without tracing it back to its divine origin first. That is something other than making Sola Scriptura the battle cry, the slogan, the cheerleader's anthem. The challenge comes to an individual. The requisite is a special calling, endowment, courage, devotion. . . . The outcome for the individual is to be ostracized. So, and so only, will evolve a "bodenstaendige," unique theology.
>
> . . . .
>
> The Wauwatosa Gospel was inquiry. . . . That is why it was the rock of offense.
>
> The Wauwatosa Theology is not to the liking of the "busy" pastor. He hasn't time for it, can't sit still that long; must flit hither and thither; can't meet his endless appointments as it is. Never sits down to a square meal, just snatches a snack and munches that on the way. Neither does the "Pfarrer" approve of it. He needs other tools to work his little patch. He craves a sinecure; not interested.
>
> It is different with the ecclesiastic. History, Church history mostly so, every refer-

> ence to a historical approach acts on him like a red rag on a bull, gets him mad. He rolls his eyes, paws the turf, throws dust, bellows, and actually charges. . . . Die Vorgeschichte geht uns nichts an.[1]

The Ruediger analysis above is at least consistent with the common observation that American Protestantism has never been especially given to reflective thought or careful self-analysis. In this sense the repudiation of what Koehler emphasized is consistent also with the observation, as developed by such men as Sidney Mead[2] and Richard Hofstadter,[3] that a certain anti-intellectualism has been pervasive in American religious history.

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[1] Faith-Life, XXIV (December, 1951), pp. 12-13. The last statement, "The background does not concern us," was a famous statement by John Brenner, former president of the Wisconsin Synod, who made that remark on October 10, 1928, when dealing with E. E. Sauer. Sauer was ousted from his professorship at Northwestern College for having preached for a pastor already suspended from the synod. Sauer's claim that the judgment on his action must depend on the rightness or wrongness of the many Protestant suspensions that preceded his and that his case then was only part of a larger case, brought forth Brenner's remark. See Faith-Life, I (November 26, 1928), p. 6. Faith-Life has ever since used the Brenner expression to personify the repudiation of Koehler's continuous insistence that the history of a thing is always relevant and, in fact, indispensable.

[2] His The Lively Experiment, the Shaping of Christianity in America (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).

[3] See especially the treatment of religion in his Anti-Intellectualism in America (New York: Knopf, 1963).

The Ruediger analysis is also consistent with Elmer Kiessling's remarks concerning the Wauwatosa Theology in his "Tie That Binds," where, among other things, he makes the observation that "ideals don't work in the practical field. There we need something the people can understand--and it is true, people don't always understand the niceties of the Wauwatosa theology."[1] This, in turn, is certainly in keeping with Koehler's own observation that what the American scene seemed to require was precisely a simplistic short cut to theology which among the Lutherans here meant that on the intellectual side the accent was on dogmatics, while "fireside devotions" ("Hausandacht") were used to nourish piety, and along with both went an excessive preoccupation with problems of church organization, government, and administration.[2] Thus what Koehler believed that the

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[1] From the reprint of the essay in Faith-Life, XXXII (May, 1959), p. 9.

[2] See the whole of Koehler's "Die Synodalkonferenz in der Geschichte der Amerikanische-Lutherischen Kirche," Theologische Quartalschrift, XIX (July, 1922), pp. 161-181. For his criticism of the preoccupation with organization, see especially p. 168. For an analysis of the psychology of officialdom as he finds it so general in American church life and its "sterile hustle and bustle", see "Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns," Faith-Life, XXV (December, 1952), p. 15.

Lutherans in America tended to arrive at was a combination of theological copy work and opportunistic improvisations.[1]

What the writer does believe can be said and defended in regard to the Wauwatosa Theology, and especially in regard to J. P. Koehler, is that there was present within the Wisconsin Synod during the years of Koehler's professorship an articulated viewpoint which held within it the resources for a healthy and fruitful reorientation of American Lutheran church life. And because Koehler so highly prized and sympathized with the intent and basic theological thrust of what lay behind confessional American Lutheranism, at the same time as he recognized its tendency toward copy work and improvisation, his criticism of it is especially significant. It is also significant that in no sense does the "liberal-conservative" dichotomy apply to what Koehler was trying to do.

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[1] Even at best the dialectical work of doctrine among American Lutherans had tended, he believed, to be copy work. This, of course, was his continuous criticism of the form of dogmatics that triumphed here. The theme of "copy work" is also tied up with Koehler's somewhat deterministic view of history together with his genetic analogy. Koehler applied this process of deterioration even to himself and in his old age wrote an interesting letter in which he discussed his own paintings. These he said were becoming more and more "stereotyped and mechanical." "Auf die Gedanken bringt mich meine Erfahrung mit den 10 Kopien. Kopiererei, darin wird alles rein Menschliche schliesslich auslaufen und in der Synodalkonferenz haben wir das schon in heller Bleute." Letter of January 31, 1935, from the files of M. A. Zimmermann. The theme helps to explain Koehler's enthusiasm for Oswald Spengler, as well as his emphasis on Verstockung (hardening).

The writer is convinced, too, that the repudiation of Koehler says something significant about the ethos of American Lutheranism and the simplism that has tended to characterize it. From this point of view one might say that Koehler was bound to be misunderstood and unappreciated and that it was something of an accident that his repudiation took place in the Wisconsin Synod.

At any rate, it is necessary to offer some record and analysis of the repudiation of Koehler and death of the Wauwatosa Theology. The latter problem needs little attention. That is, one might argue that the change in character of the Theologische Quartalschrift since the latter 1920's, has been for the better, but that there has in fact been a significant and almost radical change in its character is obvious on the basis of even a rapid survey of the journal before and after the Koehler ouster. What is not so obvious is the precise manner in which Koehler was repudiated and the sense in which the writer would maintain that virtually everything Koehler had stood for came to issue in his ouster.

The story of Koehler's ouster is, of course, intimately and, to an extent, inseparably tied up with the extremely complicated, ambiguous, and disastrous Protestant Controversy which broke out in 1924, with the so-called Watertown Case, continued in the Fort Atkinson Case, came to its culmination

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[1] Reference has been made to this particular document which became in a special sense central to the Protestant Controversy and more attention will be paid to it later. At the Wisconsin-Chippewa Valley Conference of the Wisconsin Synod at Schofield, Wisconsin, September 14-15, 1926, Pastor William F. Beitz read a paper, God's Message to Us in Galatians--The Just Shall Live by Faith. This is commonly referred to as the Beitz Paper. Almost immediately this became a center of controversy with many Synod pastors insisting that it was full of false doctrine and that its author was a heretic. For a copy of the Beitz Paper, see Paul Hensel, The Wauwatosa Gospel--Which Is It? pp. 2-27. The Gutachten was a critique of the Beitz Paper.

> Es wird auf seine geschichtliche Anschauungweise zurueckgefuehrt werden muessen, die da gilt in der Welt und in der modernen Kirche seit mehr als hundert Jahren. Sie hat die Berachtung der sogenannten dogmatischen Anschauungsweise in der Welt gesetzt. Sie stuetzt ihre Urteile auf geschichtliche Erfahrung.[1]

Koehler never was officially charged with false doctrine, but was ousted from office specifically because he could not agree with his colleagues concerning the Beitz Paper, and thus it was declared "dass Professor Koehler nicht laenger an Unserem Seminar im Segen arbeiten kann."[2] To this day, no formal heresy charges have been laid against him but he was dropped from membership in the Synod and a heavy cloud has hung over his name. In recent years some mention has been made of him, as in I. Frey's "Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 1863-1963," and in Elmer Kiessling's "Tie That Binds." It is quite obvious that Kiessling has considerable appreciation for Koehler and says that "he was perhaps the greatest individualist we have produced, and came to grief because of that individualism as far as his relations with the Synod were concerned."[1] When the official history of the Synod came to discuss Koehler's ousting no adequate treatment was given to the controversy but charges of false doctrine were specifically disavowed. What was said by way of explanation was something, however, which from any orthodox Lutheran position is highly objectionable. Thus the ousting of Koehler was mentioned in connection with the dedication of the new Seminary plant in Thiensville, Wisconsin in 1929.

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[1] Die Antwort (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1929), p. 14. Die Antwort will briefly be treated later, but it should be noted that this pamphlet constituted the reply of August Pieper and J. P. Meyer to Koehler's interpretation of the Beitz Paper. Die Antwort was sent to all pastors of the Wisconsin Synod, and as late as July 16, 1963, Meyer in the previously cited interview with the writer, continued to imply that there was something subjective, relativistic, and vacillating in Koehler's approach and that this especially came out in Koehler's treatment of the Beitz Paper.

[2] From the letter of dismissal of August 13, 1929, written by W. Hoenecke, Secretary of the Seminary Board, and printed in Faith-Life, IV (July, 1931), Supplement, p. 6. The dismissal was held up and Koehler was suspended from

> There was rejoicing and great cause for rejoicing. yet some heavy clouds were casting their shadow over the solemn occasion. One was the death of Professor Wm. Henkel. . . .

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teaching for the 1929-30 school year, but the final action of 1930, reaffirmed the action of August, 1929.

[1] *Ibid.*, XXXII (May, 1959), p. 10.

> Another was the fact that because of the confusion growing out of the Protestant Controversy the vacancy caused by the departure of Prof. Ruediger [ousted in 1926] had not yet been filled. And now it became known that serious differences had arisen between the President of the Seminary, Professor Koehler, and the other members of the faculty and the Board, differences which after almost a year of fruitless discussion were to lead to a severing of his relations, first with the Seminary, and then also with the Synod. _Be it said that the issue was never one of doctrine, but of the interpretation of a controversial document, of a resultant lack of confidence in his coworkers, and finally of a complete disagreement as to the procedure to be followed in discussing those differences_ [Italics mine]. The final outcome seems to have been as inevitable as it is regrettable to this day.[1]

The above quotation represents really a very serious confession of guilt on the part of the Wisconsin Synod. That is, although the Protestants as a whole, and the author of the _Beitz Paper_ in particular, were charged with false doctrine and could thus be removed from the Synod on grounds that could be defended theoretically according to Lutheran practice, the same could not be said about the Koehler ouster. The orthodox Lutheran position has always insisted that a man can be removed from a "divine call" only on the basis of a clear indication of false doctrine, godless living, or faithlessness to duty.[1] The fact then that Koehler could be ousted as he was simply points up the observation that in the confusing situation which had developed within the Wisconsin Synod Koehler's presence could no longer be tolerated.

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[1] _Continuing in His Word_, p. 149.

The whole Protestant Controversy, of which the J. P. Koehler case was a part, is worthy of careful study and might provide an excellent case study to illustrate certain tendencies within American Lutheranism, and especially might illustrate the difficulty an organized church has when it is forced to deal with an embarrassing situation which in its very nature is ambiguous, complicated, and open to no simple solution. When one realized that here in America even a denomination in the "church" tradition becomes an association depending upon voluntary support from its members, a situation such as the Protestant Controversy presented becomes especially embarrassing in that it opens to public view internal dissensions and confusion and thus, too, calls into question the fundamental internal health of the group in which it occurs. Along with other case studies, such as the much-publicized "Heresy Trials" that took place in the Synod of the Northwest of the United Lutheran Church in 1955 and 1956, which in certain respects were remarkably analogous to the Wisconsin Synod controversy,[1] the Protestant Controversy might help to throw light on several significant questions.

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[1] The "three classical reasons" for dismissal have been repeatedly articulated. See, for instance, Fritz, Pastoral Theology, pp. 54-55.

How, for instance, does a church get rid of people who do not fit in? How deal with issues that are at best highly ambiguous and open to no simple black and white solutions? What makes a heretic in the American Lutheran Church? In the case of the Protestants at least, it would appear that Professor Sidney Mead's observation might be very helpful, that the heretic is often the man who cannot make the distinction between formal profession and actual practice and thus takes the profession too seriously. Such a man becomes both a "radical" and a source of trouble. The writer would suggest that the Protestants took too seriously for their own good the formal profession of Wauwatosa against legalism, officialism, and formulism. Especially he would suggest that the Protestants had learned too well from August Pieper and became in the end the kind of threat the Synod could not tolerate. The most striking thing about the Beitz Paper is precisely its similarity to things that had earlier been said by August Pieper. To be sure, William Beitz was even less careful, even more careless in his generalizations, more carried away by his "repentance preaching," and less precise and even confusing in his doctrinal statements than Pieper was. However, the whole thrust of the Beitz Paper is remarkably similar to that of Pieper. The really ironical thing is that J. P. Koehler, who in almost every respect was different from both Beitz and Pieper in his manner of presentation, had to come to the defense of Beitz over against Pieper and the whole Synod.

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[1] The second major phase of the Protestant Controversy, the so-called Fort Atkinson Case, was especially analogous to the issue in the Synod of the Northwest. Even more analogous was the attitude taken by Koehler over toward the Protestant Controversy and that of George Forell toward the so-called "heretics." In both cases Forell and Koehler did not defend all the views or statements of the men under accusation, and, in fact, both specifically disavowed any such defense. For the Forell analysis, see his address at the meeting of the Synod of the Northwest, Minneapolis, Minnesota, January, 1956. For Koehler's most articulate statement, see his "Witness, Analysis, and Reply," Faith-Life, III (July, 1930), Supplement.

Paul Hensel's Wauwatosa Gospel--Which is It?[1] is best in its defense of the Beitz Paper just at that point where the objectionable sections of the paper are compared with direct quotations from Pieper. When the Pieper quotations are examined in their full context the similarity is, if anything, even more striking. By the time of the Beitz Paper, however, these things were no longer generalizations nor could they be taken as criticisms of tendencies in other groups, but in view of the inner turmoil of the Wisconsin Synod could be seen in 1926, only as testimony against "legalism among us," and as an attempt at a "Busspredigt" (sermon of repentance).

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[1] An English translation of the Hensel work has been prepared by Otto Gruendenmann and was printed in Faith-Life, XXXIII (May, July-August, September-October, 1960), pp. 1, 4-12; 5-18; 5-27. This includes the only translation of the Gutachten of the faculty of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, which constituted a condemnation of the Beitz Paper, and because then formal grounds on which the Protestants were suspended as false teachers.

The Protestant Controversy is not, however, the direct concern of this study. Even if it were, it is virtually impossible because of the inaccessibility of much of the material on the side of the Wisconsin Synod to give it an exhaustive study, although it is also true that the two most important documents are available in Hensel's Wauwatosa Gospel. A large number of Wisconsin Synod documents are also printed in the Bericht der Dokumente und Korrespondenzen der Beiden Extra Synodal-Versammlungen des West Wisconsin Districts. . . Gehalten zu Watertown, Wisconsin vom 15 bis 18. November, 1927 und vom 15 bis 16. Februar, 1928.[1] Faith-Life itself has constituted a very full documentary source including a wealth of material not otherwise available on the Wisconsin Synod side. Thus, although Faith-Life has never hesitated to make clear where it stands, it has provided a coverage of both sides of the story. Faith-Life has also included a number of studies of individual cases, most of which have been written by the individual concerned in the specific case. The best, perhaps, and certainly the most complete of these, is Paul Hensel's "Why I Am A Protestant," which was carried as a supplement to every issue of Faith-Life from February through December, 1934. Of very special interest to this study are the case studies of what might be called the "ambiguous Protestants," those who, like J. P. Koehler, found a good deal of fault on both sides, found lacking a clear-cut case, and who were finally suspended not because they agreed with everything the rest of the Protestants had said and done and certainly not because they defended everything in the Beitz Paper, but precisely because they objected to the Gutachten as an interpretation of the Beitz Paper and thus, too, to the Synod action in the case.[1]

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[1] The original disciplinary action was taken by the West Wisconsin District of the Wisconsin Synod and later ratified by the Synod as a whole.

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[1] The cases of E. E. Sauer and William Hass were much like that of J. P. Koehler in that none of the three men was a defender of the Beitz Paper and there is good evidence that neither Sauer nor Hass liked Beitz' work anymore than did Koehler. What all three did object to was the accusation of false doctrine against Beitz and his defenders. For E. E. Sauer's position, see his "We Have No Bugle-Call Sounding Retreat," Faith-Life, I (January 21, 1929), p. 5. For the position of William Hass see his "Adieu to St. Matthew's,"

At any rate, no exhaustive study of the Protestant Controversy is being attempted here. Part of it is not particularly relevant to our study, and in any event it would require a careful study of the total life of the Wisconsin Synod in the quarter-century preceding 1924. It is important, however, to point out that what was finally involved in the dismissal of J. P. Koehler was his inability to go along with what he considered the legalistic, dogmatic, and oversimplified action on the part of the Wisconsin Synod officials. In essence, Koehler applied to the concrete situation before him the hermeneutical principles he had articulated earlier, together with his analysis of "Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns" and for it paid the price of repudiation.

The Protestant Controversy developed out of a series of events which came to the surface in the 1920's,[1] and revolved around what were considered by certain pastors (for which

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. . . Ibid., V (May, 1932), Supplement. "I have never pretended. . . to defend the Beitz Paper nor do I lay claim to be able to do that now in every instance. After a somewhat careful study of the Paper I fail to see the chief accusation [against it] ." Letter of February 10, 1928, Ibid., p. 11.

[1] For the best chronology of the events and one which as a chronology would probably be regarded as sound by both sides to the issue, see Claus Gieschen, "Ten Lively Years, 1924-1934," Ibid., XI (January, 1938), pp. 5-11. Gieschen also prepared a helpful index to the events. Ibid., XI (February, 1938), pp. 10-12.

reason they became known as "Protestants") as tyrannical action on the part of the Synod. The officials of the Synod were regarded by the Protestants as being more interested in the political machinery than in honest and evangelical dealing with the underlying issues involved. Although it is evident from a study of the individual cases that the Protestants have by no means been in complete agreement among themselves, there has been thorough agreement on the general charge against the Wisconsin Synod officials of tyrannical and legalistic behavior, and that at the heart of the suspensions was the refusal of the various Protestants to accept without question the decisions of Synod officials. Thus M. A. Zimmermann reflects the general Protestant stand when he states that although he had his reservations about some things, since "it was a matter of O.K.'ing or not O.K.'ing synod officials' actions, I was forced to take a stand."[1]

The Watertown Case[2] marked the beginning of the battle.

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[1] "Declaration of Independence," Ibid., III (March, 1930), Supplement, p. 2.

[2] This case is fully documented. All the major documents, including among other things the Faculty Report, the Board Report, and an official stenographic report of the Watertown Transcript Meeting of June 12, 1924, have been reprinted in special supplements to Faith-Life, XIII (July-December, 1940); XIV (January-March, 1941).

In the spring of 1924, about 24 students of Northwestern College had been found guilty of stealing and were disciplined by the Faculty. The older boys and those regarded as the leaders were expelled, while others were given suspensions or "campus detainments," for the balance of the school year. There has never been any argument about the facts of the stealing. What caused the trouble was the interference of the Northwestern College Board (including men who were prominent leaders and officials in the Synod), which overruled the action of the Faculty, claimed it had overstepped its authority, and subsequently reinstated the expelled boys over the protest of the Faculty. The Protestant argument has always been that this not only destroyed the authority of the Faculty and laid the ground for a collapse of discipline but that the Board action was in keeping with a strong tendency toward dictatorial behavior by Synod officials. It was claimed, too, that the Board action would not have taken place had not the reputation of some prominent Synod families been at stake.

As a result of the Board action two members of the Faculty, Karl Koehler (son of J. P. Koehler) and Herbert Parisius (later of some fame as the controversial Director of the Food Production Administration of the U. S. Department of Agriculture during the Second World War) immediately resigned as teachers in the Board's employ, but offered their services gratis to the Faculty for the rest of the academic year. The Faculty accepted the offer, but the Board then accused the Faculty of having deposed it and thus ruled that the resignations must go into effect immediately.

This, in essence, was the Watertown Case, except that on June 12, 1924, a meeting for the announced purpose of hearing the Faculty side of the controversy was called under the leadership of Professor Gerhard Ruediger of the Wauwatosa Seminary. Faculty, Board, and interested people were invited to this meeting, later referred to as the Watertown Transcript Meeting. Only one Board member attended (the one who had stood on the side of the Faculty) since the Board regarded the meeting as objectionable in principle. Several of the pastors who attended were among those who later became Protestants. The Wisconsin Synod leaders have generally maintained that this meeting marked the emergence to public view of "a determined and united clique"[1] which constituted a self-conscious party within the Synod.

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[1] From the 1938 Report of the Committee of Twelve of the North Wisconsin District of the Wisconsin Synod, p. 1. This document is of special interest since it reflects an official evaluation of the whole Protestant Controversy several years after the termination of the cases. It was printed in Faith-Life, XI (August, 1938), pp. 8-16.

For a refutation of the charge that there was any united clique, see Paul Hensel, "Why I Am A Protestant," Ibid., VII (February, 1934), Supplement, p. 2. "It developed that a common viewpoint knitted together a rather heterogenous group of individuals who otherwise had very little in common with each other."

Since Professor Ruediger had arranged the meeting he was later considered most responsible for it.[1] In time he was ousted from his professorship on the basis of charges growingout of his having called that meeting. Eventually, Ruediger confessed that he had sinned and had made "slanderous" remarks about the officials. Following his confession, Ruediger received a written "absolution" signed by three of his four colleagues.[2] However, this did not settle the case against Ruediger, for soon both Ruediger's confession together with the Faculty "absolution" were mailed to every pastor within the Wisconsin Synod. By January 31, 1927, this evidently furnished a basis for ousting Ruediger, since "confidence in him had been lost."[3] The Protestant claim at this point has been that these two documents were mailed out throughout the Synod precisely _in order_ to have a basis for removing Ruediger.[1]

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[1] The **genesis** of the _Watertown Transcript Meeting_ has been explained in greatest detail by Ruediger. _Ibid_., I (July 16, 1928), pp. 5-8. This was part of a longer presentation which ran for several issues of _Faith-Life_ in which Ruediger gave the story of his case.

[2] By 1926, the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Faculty consisted of William Henkel, J. P. Meyer, August Pieper, J. P. Koehler, and Ruediger. Koehler had no part in the dealings against Ruediger. For a copy of the "absolution" see _Faith-Life_, II (June, 1930), p. 16.

[3] _Ibid_., VII (March, 1934), Supplement, p. 9.

By this time J. P. Koehler's own relations within the Seminary Faculty had seriously deteriorated. He did not, for instance, approve of the handling of the Ruediger case and his name is conspicuous by its absence from the documents coming from the Faculty. At the same time, he had not as yet clearly identified himself with either side to the controversy.

In the meantime, the *Fort Atkinson Case* developed. This was in many respects the most complicated of the cases and by its very nature highly ambiguous. Gerda Koch and Elizabeth Reuter, parochial school teachers in the large St. Paul's Lutheran Church at Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, had gotten into serious conflicts with the pastor of the congregation in which conflict the congregation stood with its pastor. There has never been, as far as the writer can discover, any question on either the Protestant or the Wisconsin Synod side but that the women were open to criticism. They had quite obviously become influenced by a type of Protestant pietism and had taken quite legalistic positions on some issues, as, for instance, bobbed hair, church socials, choir parties, etc.[1] The main point to be noted, however, is that the Protestants never defended the views held by the women, although it is also true that some were less explicit than others in disassociating themselves from the position of the women.[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, III (March, 1930), Supplement, p. 1.

For the Protestants the root of the problem lay within the Synod and the Fort Atkinson congregation. That is, both women had been born into the Wisconsin Synod, totally educated within it, and had taught exclusively in Synod schools. Thus the Synod which produced these women must be in some sense responsible for what happened.[3] It was also claimed that conditions within the Fort Atkinson congregation were bad and that from the very beginning the women had not been treated with any degree of sensitivity or with a concern to help them.[1] When the women were finally suspended from the Synod at the meeting of the West Wisconsin District at Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, June 16-22, 1926, after what the Protestants claimed was a series of dealings with the women by the Synod officials which were designed simply to force a retraction and apology from them, a group of pastors saw this as a clear evidence of legalism. Thus, this group of pastors, many of whom had also been present at the Watertown Transcript Meeting, drew up what has been called the Beaver Dam Protest.[2] This became the first formal protest from the Protestants, and constituted a criticism of the way the whole affair had been dealt with. Essential to this protest was the following statement:

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[1] For some idea of the view of the two women, as well as their analysis of the controversy, see Gerda Koch's "Appeal" written almost ten years later but in which she stands by her original position. Ibid., VIII (July, 1935), pp. 8-12.

[2] M. A. Zimmermann, for instance, not by any means one of the "ambiguous Protestants" specifically declared that he believed that "the girls had indeed sinned." He also felt, however, that the dealings with the girls had "driven them to extremes." Ibid., III (March, 1930), Supplement, p. 2.

[3] This is in full keeping with J. P. Koehler's views of corporate guilt. Faith-Life has consistently reflected this emphasis. See, as an example, Karl Koehler, "Unglaublich, Unerhoert," Ibid., III (March, 1930), pp. 6-8.

> Unsere Stellung zu der ganzen Ft. Atkinson-Sache ist diese: Wir halten dafuer, dass der Fall nur ein Teil einer groesseren Frage ist.[3]

Fifteen pastors signed this. The West Wisconsin District then empowered the officials to deal conclusively ("abschliessend") with the signers.[1] Thus began the suspension of pastors. In June, 1927, the first two Protestant pastors were suspended from the Synod. It should be noted that the two were suspended specifically because they would not withdraw their protest, "weil sie halsstarrig an ihrem Protest gegen die Synodalbeschluesse in dieser Sache festhielten."[2] J. P. Koehler did not sign the Beaver Dam Protest nor did he in any other way identify himself with the Protestants. He certainly did not agree with the two women and had, in fact, consented to make an effort specifically designed to help them see their errors.[3] What Koehler was concerned about was evangelical dealing in a spirit of love, and thus he sent a personal statement and criticism to G. M. Thurow, president of the West Wisconsin District.[4] This was dated April 17, 1926, before the suspension of the women tookplace, and Koehler hoped by means of it to prevent the impending action. He insists in that letter that all who have become involved in the case have made mistakes.

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[1] *Ibid.*, III (March, 1930,) p. 2.

[2] A copy is available in the *Bericht der Dokumente und Korrespondenzen der Beiden Extra Synodal-Versammlungen des West-Wisconsin-Distrikts. . . Gehalten zu Watertown, Wisconsin vom 15. bis 18. November, 1927, and vom 15. bis 16. Februar, 1928, p. 22.*

[3] *Ibid.*

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[1] Ibid., p. 23.

[2] Ibid., p. 24.

[3] That the two teachers did not regard Koehler as being on their side is quite obvious from Miss Koch's "Appeal," Faith-Life, VIII (July, 1935), p. 8.

[4] Ibid., IV (December, 1931), pp. 15-16.

> Now the affair is so muddled that no utterances and discussions are of any avail, because all remain one-sided. . . . The Holy Spirit does not operate that way, and suspension or excommunication at this stage is the worst thing possible. Anyone seeking to make such pronouncements must have clean hands. . . .
>
> Therefore, Mr. President, only one thing remains: that all of us who have acted in the matter appear before. . . both parties in this action and make a clean-cut, unmistakable confession, and advise them to let the matter rest as it is, and to commit it to God in heartfelt confession.[1]

The turmoil growing out of the _Watertown Case_, the _Fort Atkinson Case_, and the handling of Professor Gerhard Ruediger's removal from office were in themselves sufficient to cause disastrous repercussions within the Synod. However, in September, 1926, appeared Pastor William F. Beitz' _God's Message to Us in Galatians--The Just Shall Live by Faith_. From that time on the _Protestant Controversy_ centered around the _Beitz Paper_.

The _Beitz Paper_ almost immediately spread beyond the confines of the pastoral conference in which it had been read.[1] Those Wisconsin Synod pastors who had been disturbed by the previous issues tended to see the Beitz Paper as a relevant and appropriate call to repentance.[2] Many other pastors, and especially a number of officials, took a strong stand against Beitz. Thus, for instance, Beitz had been scheduled to speak in November, 1926, to a conference of parochial school teachers, but the president of the West Wisconsin District protested this and the invitation was withdrawn.[3]

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[1] _Ibid_., p. 16. Translation by Albert Meier.

In February, 1927, G. M. Thurow, president of the West Wisconsin District, called a meeting of all district presidents of the Synod.[4] They, however, refused to deal in the problem until the West Wisconsin District had acted.[5] Thus,

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[1] The work of spreading the Beitz Paper was evidently carried on by both supporters and **opponents** of Beitz and thus several editions were in circulation. Ibid., I (June 18, 1928), p. 2.

[2] This much is obvious from almost all the Protestant case studies. Even such men as W. Hass and Elmer Sauer, although they had reservations, believed that what the author meant to say was obvious and basically sound. For an example, see Hass's "Adieu to St. Matthew's," Ibid., V (May, 1932), Supplement, p. 11.

[3] Claus Gieschen, "Ten Lively Years," Ibid., XI (January, 1938,) p. 7.

[4] Ibid.

[5] This was in keeping with synodical procedure. In the Wisconsin Synod such issues are dealt with on the district level and then automatically respected by the Synod except in exceptional cases.

Thurow requested an "opinion" (*Gutachten*) from the Faculty of the Seminary. Although this was not in keeping with Wisconsin Synod practice (but had been common in the Missouri Synod), and had been objected to as a practice by the *Wauwatosa Theology*,[1] in this case the request was acceded to.

The *Gutachten der Theologischen Fakultaet von Wauwatosa ueber die Konferzarbeit Betitelt: God's Message to Us in Galatians: The Just Shall Live by Faith*,[2] was written by August Pieper and J. P. Meyer, and on June 7, 1927, was signed by the four members of the Faculty, August Pieper, J. P. Meyer, W. Henkel, and J. P. Koehler. Koehler by this time was at the breaking point with his colleagues but did reluctantly sign.[3] He signed, however, with the understanding that the *Gutachten* would not be made public until he had had a chance to discuss the issues with Beitz. Koehler not only took it for granted as a matter of Christian ethics that one does not condemn a man until he discusses things with him but also, in full keeping with his hermeneutical principle,[1] did not approve of "eines Mannes Rede auf ihren nackten Wortlaut hin zu pressen."[2] Thus he wanted to discuss with Beitz what the latter meant by his words.

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[1] Im P. Frey, "Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary," p. 224.

[2] The most accessible copy of this is available in Paul Hensel, *Wauwatosa Gospel*, pp. 28-65. A translation appeared in *Faith-Life*, XXXIII (July-August, 1960), pp. 5-18. For a briefer criticism of the *Beitz Paper*, see J. P. Meyer, "Brief Review," *Theologische Quartalschrift*, XXV (April, 1928), pp. 135-160.

[3] That his signature was reluctant and with reservations has never been effectively challenged by either side to the battle.

By the time Koehler went to see Beitz at Rice Lake, Wisconsin, Beitz already had the Gutachten in his hands, since it had been sent to all pastors of the Synod. Koehler then withdrew his signature from the Gutachten and ordered the printing and mailing by the Northwestern Publishing House, at his own expense, of the following communication to all pastors of the Synod:

> Wauwatosa, Wis., July 2, 1927
>
> My Dear Pastor:
> The "Faculty Gutachten" was published without my knowledge and consent.
> I had a different conception from my colleagues as to what the "essayist" actually wished to say. Consequently, I offered to discuss the contents of the Gutachten and the Message [Beitz Paper] with the essayist and apprised the assembly of the General Committee with this fact.

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[1] "Analogy of Faith," Faith-Life, XXV (May, 1952), p. 11.

[2] Ibid., II (September, 16, 1929), p. 4.

> The publication of the Gutachten acutely disturbed these private deliberations, and in my opinion, as matters now stand, must mislead, agitate, and eventually slander. Do your part in helping us arrive at an understanding, which must be our constant endeavor, so that our efforts be not frustrated.
>
> With cordial greetings,
> John Philip Koehler[1]

Quite by accident this card in its proof stage came to the attention of a member of the Board of the Seminary, and thus, too, to the attention of Koehler's colleagues.[2] Koehler was taken to task, vacillated, and subsequently withdrew the notice. At any rate he was from this time on under very heavy attack.

At this point in the story of the Beitz Paper, it is perhaps advisable to leave the J. P. Koehler case and briefly summarize the course of the Protestants and the Synod's treatment of them, since in certain respects the Synod's dealing with Koehler and the main body of Protestants should be considered separately even though both were part of the same issue.

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[1] *Ibid.*, XXXIII (July-August, 1960), p. 18. There are good indications that Koehler believed that he might have persuaded Beitz to rewrite his essay and clarify the more vulnerable sections, but that after the Gutachten this was no longer possible.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

The Gutachten charged Beitz with a number of errors and especially accused him of a slanderous judging of hearts, of false doctrine with regard to the teaching of repentance, of a confused mingling of justification and sanctification, of antinomian tendencies, and of a "schwaermerisch" emphasis. At the special convention of the West Wisconsin District at Watertown, Wisconsin, November 15-18, 1927, a number of resolutions were passed dealing with the Beitz Paper and those who supported it.[1]

Beitz spoke on the floor of this convention and declared that he was in agreement with the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church, that he did not intend to judge hearts, and that he was not even aware of being at variance with the objective doctrine of the Faculty as set forth in the Gutachten.[2] He also insisted that he was including himself in the judgment of legalism.

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[1] The official report of the convention does not help one capture much about the charged atmosphere of the meeting. The stenographic report is not accessible. For a story of the convention as seen by a Protestant, see R. E. Ave-Lallemant, "Report on Sessions of the West Wisconsin District Synod Meeting," Ibid., I (June 4, June 18, 1928), pp. 2-9, 2-11.

[2] This attitude toward the objective doctrine of the Gutachten has been general among the Protestants even if they have also felt that it was a bad theological job, even aside from its interpretation of Beitz. At the same time the Protestants have never been willing to deal on the basis of the Gutachten, since it judges them as heretics before they have been heard and because its objective doc-

> I find myself in the same legalistic condemnation again and again. . . . I believe also that if I were not in the same legalistic condemnation, which is always loveless, I should have spoken somewhat different in expressing the message. . . . In addition, if I would have written it for a larger body--if I would have known that others outside of our conference were to read it,--if I would have known that people that do not know me intimately were to read it. . . I should no doubt have expressed myself more definitely. *Yet I do not believe that this has caused the misunderstanding* [Italics mine] .[1]

The last point is especially important, since the Protestants have always claimed that the false doctrine charge was simply an excuse for getting at them. In view of the nature of the *Gutachten* and because it was not felt that

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trine could not be separated from its interpretation of Beitz. Thus, for instance, a group of Wisconsin Synod pastors in the hope of providing a *modus vivendi* requested the various Protestants in 1931 to say whether or not they agreed with J. P. Koehler's statement that "Die Lehrdarstellung im Gutachten ist unanfechtbar." With one exception, the replies quite clearly implied that the Protestants agreed to this, at the same time as they violently rejected the *Gutachten*. For the letters themselves, see *Faith-Life*, IV (August, September, October, 1931), pp. 11-13, 15-16, 8-11. Typical of the refusal to deal on the basis of the *Gutachten* is the statement of W. F. Beitz, "As far as I am personally concerned I refuse to deal with anyone or anybody on the basis of 'heretic'." *Ibid*., (August), p. 13.

[1] The above is Beitz' recollection of what he had said and was written from memory following the convention. *Ibid*., VIII (June, 1935), p. 15.

the real objection was at the point of doctrine anyway, Beitz did refuse to retract his essay. This, too, became the general position of the Protestants. Even among those who otherwise would grant that the Beitz Paper was open to criticism, careless in its statements, etc., it was felt that over against the Gutachten it was to be defended.[1]

The 1927 convention passed a resolution which in one motion both accepted the Gutachten and condemned the Beitz Paper by declaring "dass wir uns zu den Ausfuehrung der Professoren bekennen und damit die Verdammungsurteile und die falschen Lehre, die in der Beitzschen Schrift gefuehrt werden, verwerfen."[2] It should be noted that this resolution meant that in accepting the Gutachten, even its objective doctrine, one was also declaring the Beitz Paper to be heresy. Thus, too, some who were otherwise not pleased with the latter were forced to vote against the resolution or not to vote at all. In either case they were to be disciplined.[3] It was also resolved "dass wir die Lehrer, Professoren und Pastoren, die dem Referat des Pastor Beitz beistimmen und darin beharren, ansehen als solche, die sich von uns getrennt haben."[1]

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[1] See, for instance, Paul Hensel, "As Though--Horribile Dictu," Ibid., XII (March, 1939), pp. 8-11.

[2] Bericht der Dokumente. . .des West-Wisconsin-Districts, p. 47.

[3] M. A. Zimmermann, "Declaration of Independence," Faith-Life, III (March, 1930), Supplement, p. 5.

Thus, the Protestants were suspended and eventually some over 40 pastors and professors lost their membership within the Wisconsin Synod because of the Protestant Controversy. It should be noted, too, that since the 1927 resolutions the Protestants have been regarded as a separate entity not in fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod. Thus to practice fellowship with them was in itself sufficient ground for suspension. Elmer Sauer, for instance, was ousted as a professor from Northwestern College specifically because he had preached at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church at Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, of which the suspended W. P. Hass was pastor. Sauer's guilt was proven simply by establishing the fact that he had preached there and would not seek forgiveness for what he had done.[2] It was in this case, too, that the statement was made that "die Vorgeschichte geht uns nichts an."

As late as 1950, this procedure was still in operation and by means of it any investigation of the rightness or wrongness of the original position of the Synod was avoided. That is, in the summer of 1950, Pastor Marcus Albrecht of Akaska, South Dakota, declared that he recognized the Protestants as his brethren, and he so informed both his parish and the officials of his district.[1] The officials then appeared for a meeting with Albrecht and his parish. Here the officials took the position that by the very fact that Albrecht recognized the Protestants as brethren he had separated himself from the Wisconsin Synod, since the Protestants were not in fellowship with the Synod.[2] The final upshot was Albrecht's suspension.[3] He was also discharged as pastor of his parish.

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[1] Bericht der Dokumente, p. 47.

[2] For the official notice of Sauer's suspension, see Faith-Life, I (November 12, 1928), p. 4.

Following the Watertown meeting of 1927, the first Protestant Conference was held at Marshfield, Wisconsin,[4] and

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[1] The text of his statement has been reprinted. Ibid., XXIV (February, 1951), Supplement.

[2] For a stenographic transcript of this meeting, see Ibid., XXIV (April 1951), Supplement.

[3] The suspension notice appeared in the Northwestern Lutheran, XXXVII (December 31, 1950), p. 287.

[4] Paul Hensel, "Why I Am a Protestant," Ibid., VII (April, 1934), Supplement, p. 4.

Faith-Life began publication with the issue of Easter, 1928. The Protestant Conference has never become an organized synod nor attempted any program of church extension. It has continued, rather, as a somewhat informal group of pastors and lay people who continue to meet two or three times a year. In fact, several of the Protestants have joined other Lutheran synods even while continuing to attend the Protestant conferences.

In concluding this brief discussion of the Protestant Controversy, the writer would suggest that the Protestant Conference and Faith-Life, especially during their early years, tended to give expression to the radical wing of the Wauwatosa Theology. He would suggest that the Protestants especially emphasized those aspects of the Wauwatosa Theology that were most characteristic of August Pieper. Their polemics, too, bore considerable similarity to his. This generalization is most manifestly true of the Beitz Paper, which should not have come as any special shock to people who for years had been listening. It appears to be well-recognized that W. F. Beitz himself had been something of a protege of Pieper.[1] What the Protestants, among other things, failed to do was to make the necessary distinction between profession and practice and in this sense were not perhaps realistic.

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[1] Koehler makes an unmistakable reference to this in a letter of August 7, 1945, to J. P. Meyer. "It was not I who had a personal influence upon Beitz during the impression-

The course of the Protestant Conference would also indicate that the Protestants were by no means all of one stripe, that there really was not such a thing as a "Protestant Movement,"[1] but that they were a somewhat heterogeneous group of men who had taken seriously Wauwatosa's polemic against formalism and legalism and were bound together by their protest against what they saw as legalism in the Wisconsin Synod. This became obvious soon after the beginning of Faith-Life, and by the early 1930's, several Protestants ceased attending conferences.[2] It is also quite obvious that there was considerable confusion and even

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able years of his development. This I observed myself and others, too, have confirmed my observation." Faith-Life, XXXVI (May, 1963), p. 13. Although Beitz received part of his education at the Chicago Lutheran Seminary at Maywood, Illinois, the reference here is certainly not to that.

[1] The Wisconsin Synod has, to be sure, consistently thought of it this way. As late as 1963, J. P. Meyer continues to refer to it as though it were a concerted, planned, and self-conscious movement. See his "Obituary of John Brenner," Theologische Quartalschrift, LX (January, 1963), p. 10.

[2] The internal differences are reported on in the Minutes of several of the conferences during the period from 1931-1933.

theological instability among the early Protestants. Paul Hensel, in fact, has specifically admitted this but has also insisted that such instability does not deny the essential correctness of what the Protestants represented _over against_ the Synod.

> There has been much deprecatory talk about the early Protestants: Pietists, enthusiasts, this, that, and the other. We are not going to color or retouch a blurred photograph. Why marvel at that? Has everybody forgotten the nativity of our Wisconsin Synod? Her father was an Amorite and her mother a Hittite . . . . Those early Protestants broke the hard turf of formalism. The first furrow is the hardest to plow, and is never straight. You have no guide to go by. In order to rise above the entangling errors of legalistic practices in church discipline they proposed to discuss what they termed: _Hoehere Fragen_. It meant reorientation all down the line. The church could ill afford to ignore their direction. The Wisconsin Synod did ignore it to its own hurt. . . . In their evangelical position the early Protestants, too, in spite of all, by faith were superior to their mechanical-minded masters, judges, and executioners.[1]

To return now to the story of John Philip Koehler, it should be re-emphasized that he was no regular Protestant. He was even less so than those whom we have called the "ambiguous Protestants." At the same time, it is also true that from the time of the Gutachten on Koehler was moving steadily toward his dismissal. Precisely because in Koehler's case everything he stood for theologically came to issue in the controversy,[1] the writer intentionally refers to this as the death of the Wauwatosa Synod, and the beginning of a new period for the Wisconsin Synod. Whatever else is true, the point of view of Koehler has most certainly not dominated the theological stance of the Wisconsin Synod during the last 30 years. What rather strikes the reader of the Theologische Quartalschrift during the last 30 years is the triumph of that sort of dogmatics which we discussed in connection with Franz Pieper.[2] The Wisconsin Synod has represented in late years a remarkably simple, neat, and clearly-defined position, although, ironically, Wisconsin has achieved this at just the same time as such a system has begun to disintegrate in other areas of American Lutheranism, most notably within the Missouri

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[1] "Gnad und Staerk von Gott Zuvor," _Faith-Life_, XXV (April, 1952), p. 9.

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[1] This might be considered an overstatement. However, the writer would say that if one takes seriously Koehler's principles as articulated especially in his "Analogy of Faith" and the "Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns," exactly what he had in mind came to the concrete test in the Beitz Paper and the Gutachten.

[2] Like every generalization, this one is open to qualification. The Im. P. Frey history of the Seminary, for instance, shows certain influences consistent with the Wauwatosa Theology. Elmer Kiessling's "Tie that Binds," too, while not exactly a reflection of Koehler, was most certainly not a typical Synod analysis. There are several other exceptions.

Synod, where, whatever the form of profession may be, the content is by no means identical with what Franz Pieper and his contemporaries had in mind.[1]

Koehler, as pointed out before, went to considerable lengths to avoid the Protestant Controversy, even to the extent of withdrawing his projected post-card notice concerning the Gutachten. During this time, too, it is a recognized fact that he was far from enthusiastic about the Beitz Paper. Koehler even said when informed that Beitz would not withdraw his essay that "dann muss ich Beitz fallen lassen," and again, "dass ich Beitz fuer die folgen des Streits haltbar mache."[2] Paul Hensel refers to the disappointment of the early Protestants at Koehler's hesitancy about taking a firm stand behind them.

> I must admit, Professor Koehler's statement of "Fallen lassen" cut me to the quick and brought to my mind a similar statement made

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[1] Refer again to the anthology of doctrinal essays, The Abiding Word. By no stretch of the imagination could these be said to represent the position (the practiced position) of the Missouri Synod today. In this sense the charge of the Wisconsin Synod is true (as see, Continuing in His Word, pp. 55-60) that Missouri "has changed."

[2] Paul Hensel, "Why I Am a Protestant," Faith-Life, VII (August, 1934), Supplement, p. 30.

> by him in a critical moment, when the heat was turned on Ruediger: "*Ich will Eurem Vorhaben nicht im Wege stehen, nur dass ich mein Zeugnis nach beiden Seiten hin aufrecht erhalten will*." However, the Professor at all times acted in the spirit of and in accordance with the precepts he held up to us protestants. . .: "*Es handelt sich nicht um Rechtstreit*, *sondern darum*, *dass man alle Dinge handeln soll im Glauben und in Liebe*, *wobei das Sich-selbst-aufgeben voran steht*." He believed that once the stumbling-stone of the *Beitz Paper* was removed by retraction, the way would be paved, "*die urspruengliche Sache*, *naemlich den Protest gegen das offizioese Beamtentum*, *einer ruhigen Behandlung zu unterzeihen*," a hope that the rest of us could not warm up to. There is where we differed.[1]

Whatever, however, Koehler thought of the *Beitz Paper* he knew also that the *Gutachten* was a serious misinterpretation of it. He also knew that it is one thing to have reservations about a paper, to consider it careless, unfortunate, and even theologically confused, but it is quite another thing to charge someone with heresy. Thus, Koehler in his position toward the *Beitz Paper* applied what he had always insisted on and in so doing applied also the best of the *Wauwatosa Theology*.

1. Any statement or action of a man or a group must be seen and judged in its concrete historical con-

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[1] *Ibid*.

text. In the case of Beitz, the context was the turmoil within the Synod and Beitz' own troubled reaction to what he saw. In this context many things become understandable.

2. Any paper must be judged by sound exegetical principles. Unless one wants to ride the Wortlaut in a legalistic fashion, one must always try to discover what a man means by his words. No one else's interpretation dare be superimposed on an author. In Beitz' case even the Wortlaut itself did not have to be judged as heretical. Above all and especially in controversy one must be certain that he reads his opponent as the opponent means to be read. Form and content must be distinguished.
3. Truth is seldom simple and no simple solution may be open in a given situation.
4. All action, even when one is dealing with what really is heresy, must be evangelical. That is, it must be motivated by love and fairness. Legalism immediately invalidates an action.

The Gutachten thus could not stand whatever were the faults of Beitz. Nor could any evangelical dealing with Beitz be possible on the basis of a document which judged him as a heretic ahead of time and with no personal discussion with him.

After a second visit with Beitz in the summer of 1927, Koehler in October, 1927, wrote up for his colleagues what he called his Ertrag.[1] This has never been published nor was it circulated, but by all reports it consisted of a rather mild correction of the Gutachten, mainly showing that the Beitz Paper need not be understood as the Gutachten understood it.[2] Nothing was accomplished, however, and the Gutachten not only stood but in effect took on the status of a confessional writing.[3] Once, too, that it had been shown that the Gutachten misinterpreted Beitz, Koehler saw it as slanderous.[4]

Somewhat later Koehler's Ertrag found expression in his Beleuchtung,[5] which was printed and made available before the

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[1] Claus Gieschen, "Ten Lively Years," Ibid., XI (January, 1938), p. 8.

[2] Ibid., p. 9.

[3] Precisely this is what the West Wisconsin District resolutions of 1927 did in the use of the Gutachten. See Bericht der Dokumente, p. 47.

[4] See Koehler's projected post card of July 2, 1927.

[5] The Beleuchtung is included as the second part of Koehler's "Witness, Analysis, and Reply," as that was printed later. Faith-Life, III (July, 1930), Supplement.

1929 convention of the Wisconsin Synod at Sharon Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 14-19. Like most of what Koehler wrote it was objective, impersonal, and quite unpolemical.

Koehler's Beleuchtung was followed by the Antwort of August Pieper and J. P. Meyer, in which nothing at all of the Gutachten was retracted and it became instead a rather savage attack on Koehler and his "geschichtliche Anschauung." By this time Koehler's theological professorship was coming to an end. Futile meetings were held between Koehler and the Faculty and Seminary Board. Matters were so tense that at one of these meetings Koehler asked Paul Hensel to serve as a silent witness, but because Hensel had published the Wauwatosa Gospel, in which he attacked the Gutachten, his presence was objected to and Koehler excused him from attendance.[1]

Immediately before the Synod convention of August, 1929, and before Koehler had even seen the text of the Antwort, he received the following communication:

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[1] Hensel tells the story of this meeting. Ibid., VII (August, 1934), Supplement, pp. 30-31.

> Milwaukee, Wis., Aug. 13, 1929
>
> Worthy Professor:
>
> It is my grievous duty to communicate to you the following dismissal, arrived at by the Board on August 13, after they had read your document [*Beleuchtung*] and the answer [*Antwort*] of Professors Pieper and Meyer.
>
> We are unreservedly in agreement on all points with the reply written. . .in answer to Professor Koehler's "*Die Beitzsche Schrift und das Gutachten beleuchtet*," and therefore, declare that Professor Koehler cannot continue in office at our seminary and expect God to bless his efforts.
>
> On behalf of the Board,
> W. Hoenecke, Secretary[1]

On August 15, 1929, Koehler replied with the following letter addressed to convened Synod.

> Theinsville, Wisconsin
> August 15, 1929
>
> Dear Brethren:
>
> Yesterday morning the following letter was given to me by the Secretary of the Seminary Board without further explanation.
>
> . . . .
>
> Of what nature the *Antwort* of the two professors might be, I have not the slightest idea. Therefore, the line of reasoning leaves me in the dark altogether as to why the resolution was passed at all, and above all why at this late hour instead of biding

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[1] *Ibid*., IV (July, 1931), Supplement, p. 6. Translation by Philemon Hensel.

> the decision of synod on the matter.
>
> The situation is further aggravated by vague rumors seeping into synod, rumors which always accompany a procedure of this nature and serve but one purpose, to distort the facts, prejudice the minds, and make a gazing stock of the victim.
>
> Both of which oppresses me, so that I cannot participate in the synodical discussions, which normally would be my privilege. At the same time I desire herewith to call synod's attention to a matter which every delegate had a right to know before it is consigned to a committee.
>
> (Signed) J. P. Koehler[1]

Inview of the inaccessibility of some of the material on the side of the Synod, it is difficult to chart the precise course of events of the months following this. This much, however, is clear, that Koehler was not, in spite of the Board resolution, immediately ousted. The Seminary Committee was instructed to deal further in the matter. However, by September 29, 1929, things had so deteriorated that Koehler refused to have any further dealings with the Committee until the following things had been changed: (1) the unqualified subscription to the Gutachten, which having been shown up as incorrect, now stood as slander against Beitz; (2) the resolutions of the Seminary Board of August 13, 1929, to the effect that Koehler could no longer teach; (3) the subscription to the Antwort on the part of the Seminary Board.[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, XXVI (November, 1953), p. 11. Translation by Philemon Hensel.

Koehler was suspended from all his duties at the Seminary during the 1929-1930 academic year, and then on May 21, 1930, was permanently removed from office and told to vacate his house.[2] Koehler then moved to Neillsville, Wisconsin, where he made his home with his son, Karl, who both served as editor of Faith-Life and as pastor of a very small congregation. For all practical purposes Koehler's ouster from the Seminary ended his affiliations with the Wisconsin Synod, although the official suspension from the Synod took place at the convention of the Synod of August 2-9, 1933, and was based specifically on the charge that Koehler was "openly practicing fellowship with those who have severed relations with us."[3]

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[1] Im P. Frey, "Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary," Theologische Quartalschrift, LX (July, 1963), p. 225. For Karl Koehler's analysis of the same action, i.e., his father's refusal to deal further, see Faith-Life, III (June, 1930), p. 11. After two years of futile wrangling in which nothing Koehler had said had made any difference, he considered it hypocritical to go on with the discussions unless there were some indications of a willingness to get together with an open mind and without the prior demand that Koehler retract.

[2] For a report on this final action, see Paul Hensel, "La Commedia E Finita," Ibid., III (June, 1930), pp. 11-12.

[3] Report of the Twenty-Second Meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, Held at

Thus, the Wisconsin Synod went its own way and J. P. Koehler went his. The course which the Wisconsin Synod has followed since the time of the *Protestant Controversy* is manifestly different from what Koehler had in mind, but that is, of course, another story. It does, however, account for the fact that this writer refers to the repudiation of Koehler as also marking the death of the *Wauwatosa Theology*. When Koehler died September 30, 1951, no attention was paid to this in the *Theologische Quartalschrift*, which is perhaps a fitting symbol of the extent to which he had been forgotten.

J. P. Koehler then spent the rest of his life in Neillsville, Wisconsin, received financial support from the Protestant Conference, attended and spoke at the conferences of the Protestants, but remained to the end something of a lone rider. He never did become a full-scale Protestant and remained critical of much the Protestants had done and of much that was written in *Faith-Life*. The polemics, for instance, of the latter were not in keeping with his make-up or his analysis of the controversy. He, according to the Secretary of the Protestant Conference, was at times shocked by the "Pistolenartikel" (fighting language) in *Faith-*

St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, August 2-9, 1933 (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1933), pp. 38-39.

Life,[1] and had a fundamentally different attitude from even his son as to the character of the Wisconsin Synod.

> Professor Koehler was highly critical of the Protestants, and insisted that in their methods of polemics, via Faith-Life, they went too far. His contention was that the leaders of the Wisconsin Synod are merely stupid. His son, Karl, however, added that they are wicked.[2]

A good deal could be said of Koehler's old age since there are available the minutes of the various conferences of the Protestants which report in some detail his comments at Protestant conferences.[3] However, what can be said is that his viewpoint remained consistent with the exception, as would be expected, that he became considerably freer in his statements and more outspoken in his criticism of certain trends within the branch of Lutheranism from which he came. The rigidity, for instance, of the doctrine of

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[1] Marcus Albrecht, "Conference Report," Faith-Life, XXXII (November, 1959), pp. 14-15.

[2] Philemon Hensel, Letter of October 4, 1951, to Jaroslav Pelikan. Reprinted, Ibid., XXVI (November, 1953), p. 9.

[3] These are very interesting, since they report on Koehler's free comments at conferences where he evidently did a good deal of talking. There is also available a kind of daily diary kept by Karl Koehler up to the time of his death on May 3, 1948. This includes a rather full account of how his father spent his days in painting, reading, going for walks, visiting, etc. Koehler apparently had a pleasant old age and lived something of the life of a village gentleman.

Unionism as that came increasingly (from Missouri Synod sources) to motivate and determine the action of the Wisconsin Synod, was most certainly not in keeping with the best of the Wauwatosa Theology which had never approved of the rigidity of the Missourians on this issue.[1]

J. P. Koehler's consistent charity, as well as his broad ecumenical concern, is personified in what he wrote years after his suspension in his conclusion to the "History of the Wisconsin Synod."

> May God, thru His Holy Spirit, preserve Synod and all who with her call upon the name of the Lord, in that soberness--of which even the old Greeks in their human wisdom knew enough to say: "nothing beyond measure!"--which Paul here in v. 3 [Romans 12] would have applied to the divine gift, and of which he makes application throughout the whole chapter for all the children of God in all their doing, for all time![2]

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[1] See "Editorial Note," Ibid., XIV (August, 1941), p. 12. There were, it would appear, indications of a Missourian doctrine of Unionism in John Schaller's writings, but there is no doubt but that such a position was not characteristic of either August Pieper or J. P. Koehler. See, for instance, the pertinent sections on an ecumenical attitude in Koehler's "Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns," These would make no sense given the present position of the Wisconsin Synod. It is especially noteworthy that the Protestants, who might be criticized for simply trying to "repristinate" the Wauwatosa Theology as they absorbed it during their student days, find the present position of the Wisconsin Synod to be an eccentric innovation. See, for instance, Karl Koehler, "The Battle for Romans 16:17-20," Ibid., XV (June, July, 1942), p. 1, 12-16; 1, 12-15.

[2] Ibid., XVI (December, 1943), p. 11.

EPILOGUE

There are several things that I might say in conclusion to this study of John Philip Koehler and the Wauwatosa Theology. I would, however, refer the reader back to the first chapter of this work and to the reasons given there as to why I regard this study as important in the larger context of American Lutheranism. While I am well aware that no conclusive answers have been given to the questions which were implied in that first chapter, I also hope and believe that this study of a neglected and almost entirely unknown facet of American Lutheranism will prove to be one of those "little studies" which must be completed before anything approaching a definitive and interpretive story of American Lutheranism can be told.

It will certainly be obvious that although I have as a result of my study become increasingly convinced of the impossibility of precisely defining the Wauwatosa Theology or even of defending the use of that term in the sense that it might be described as a well thought out, self-conscious, original school of thought with a systematic program, I nevertheless continue to use the term. I believe that the term properly qualified does point to a significant reality. Thus, there is a very real sense in which one may speak of such a thing as the Wauwatosa Theology and to speak of it, too, as a valiant, imaginative, relevant, and significant attempt to reorient the course of Midwestern American Lutheranism. Especially insofar as the term points to the work of John Philip Koehler it can properly be used to refer to something which in its context was both creative and surprising.

The Wauwatosa Theology at its best--and its best is personified in Koehler[1]--was an attempt to emphasize self-analysis and self-criticism, to scrutinize and evaluate the content of a thing under its form, to view things historically and organically, to protest against that combination of improvisation and copywork that Koehler believed characterized the form of Lutheranism that triumphed here in America, to provide resources to transcend the theological methodology that had involved American Lutheranism in one controversy after another, and to open up a way for unity by providing a different way of doing theology, a way which although less simple than what prevailed at the time, was also more profound and might have been more productive of elasticity and theological vitality. In all these ways the Wauwatosa Theology was an interesting and admirable experiment in theological methodology. In addition, just the form of its articulation and the burden of its message provide the alert student also with a way of looking at the form of Lutheranism that was dominant in the time and context of the Wauwatosa Theology.

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[1] I should perhaps add here that I have judged Koehler by what he wrote. When I speak as I do above of him I refer, of course, to his writings. Interviews with several former students have been very interesting in giving a picture of his personality but they have not been especially relevant to my investigation. That is, several students who have remained in the Wisconsin Synod, and one in particular whose judgments I respect, have pointed to Koehler's personality idiosyncrasies. That these may have existed and that they may have played into the conflicts that led to his ousting, I do not deny. Neither do I mean to affirm that he was a "difficult case." Opinions at this point vary and tend to vary in accordance with how the individual interviewed stood on the Synod action against Koehler. I have thus, both by necessity and by preference, avoided any judgment on Koehler as a personality.

It may appear as a truism to assert that the issues with which J. P. Koehler concerned himself are many of them still with American Lutheranism. To take only one example--that of the problem of Lutheran unity, as well as the larger problem of ecumenical relationships. It is my distinct impression that American Lutheranism has by no means yet solved the problem that is basic to that issue. The union movement is continuing but an adequate theological foundation for it is frequently lacking. That is, at least two of the three major Lutheran groups in America continue to approach this problem to a large extent in that same tradition of dogmatics as we saw personified in the theological approach of Franz Pieper. Thus the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod continues to operate with its well-known Brief Statement, a document which perfectly illustrates exactly the methodology which Wauwatosa attempted to correct. In fact, the problem becomes even more serious today when the Brief Statement can no longer by any stretch of the imagination be said to describe the actual content of the faith and practice even of that group which formally subscribes to it. I use this simply to illustrate an especially glaring instance of the dichotomy between form and content, profession and practice, and thus, too, to indicate the type of formalism which to Koehler would indicate a fundamental lack of health and which he would say could not help but contribute to theological evasion. The union documents of the American Lutheran Church, too, stand in this same theological tradition.[1] In this instance, while the doctrinal pinpointing is considerably less vigorous than in the Brief Statement, it can again be asserted that the way to unity has remained that same approach which Koehler saw in the history of conservative American Lutheranism.[2] It is also true here, as well as in the case of the Missouri Synod and its Brief Statement, that the formal confession does not necessarily describe the life of the group involved. Thus, among other things, the danger is always present that when and if unity finally does come to American Lutheranism it may not be on the basis of theology at all, but as a fruit of expediency or conformity to social pressures and in a way that evades theology partly because of a weariness with seeking to find a theological warrant for what is nevertheless regarded as a desirable achievement.

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[1] See Report of the Joint Union Committee to the Conventions of the Negotiating Bodies, 1956 (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1956).

[2] For a discussion of exactly this problem in the context of contemporary American Lutheranism, see Nelson and Fevold, The Lutheran Church Among Norwegian-Americans, II, pp. 229-240, 281-331.

The Wauwatosa Theology failed, to be sure, and John Philip Koehler and his "geschichtliche Anschauung" were quite thoroughly repudiated. "Die Vorgeschichte geht uns nichts an" became in effect the judgment of the church in which Koehler had lived and served. I can find very little evidence that what I refer to as the positive message of the Wauwatosa Theology has had any lasting effect on the Wisconsin Synod. This, I believe, is a statement of fact. One's reaction to the fact, whether in approval or disapproval, depends upon what position one takes toward Koehler's point of view and method as well as toward the deeper implications of the Protestant Controversy, which, whatever else might be said about that unfortunate episode, at least brought to a decisive issue the contrast between two quite different ways of dealing with an issue which in its very nature was ambiguous and many-sided.

The Wisconsin Synod since the time of the Protestant Controversy has gone in a direction which is different from what Koehler had in mind. The other synods of American Lutheranism never did discover the Wauwatosa Theology and thus, like the Wisconsin Synod, went their several ways independent of anything Koehler might have said to them. Where some of the insights of Koehler and the Wauwatosa Theology have taken root in American Lutheranism this has come through other sources. Nothing, then, of lasting effect can be claimed for Wauwatosa except insofar as Faith-Life and the Protestant Conference have attempted to appropriate its point of view, or insofar as some individuals have been influenced. But at any rate, this does not gainsay the observation that American Lutheranism, for better or for worse, has had to make its way without the light which the old (1904-1928) Theologische Quartalschrift might have shed on its problems.

Still, the Wauwatosa Theology and J. P. Koehler, and the Protestants, too, for that matter, are not only interesting in their own right and thus also of importance as part of that story, not yet told, of American Lutheranism, but the mere fact that Koehler and what he represented failed as they did has, I believe, something highly important to suggest as one key to interpret American Lutheran Church history. As one relevant case study the study of the death of the Wauwatosa

Theology may help to answer the somewhat elusive question as to why American Lutheranism, especially of the Midwestern variety as that took its character in the second half of the nineteenth century and lived on into the twentieth, tended to assume a form which superficially might appear as an outstanding example of "repristination" but may illustrate something in fact quite different.

It is simply not true that Midwestern American Lutheranism reproduced European Old Lutheranism. "Cultural lag" as an interpretation of American Lutheranism even at best makes only very limited sense. It makes no sense, however, of the rather basic modifications that took place in the form of Lutheranism here, nor does it make any sense of the creative genius of such a "repristination" group as the Missouri Synod, whose remarkable success story and whose ability, for instance, to come through the cultural crisis that World War I represented do not at all fit what we would expect of a group captive to "cultural lag." It makes more sense, at least as one side of the story, to see the form of Lutheranism that developed here as an adaptation to what the American environment needed. For among other things, the Lutherans here needed a strong sense of self-identity and organizational loyalty. They needed a system of theology that was neat, simple, unambiguous, easily learned, and easily taught. Thus emerged that combination of copywork and pragmatic improvisation[4] that together made for a new form, and a peculiarly American form, of Lutheranism.

The historical-exegetical approach of J. P. Koehler was neither simple nor neat. The emphasis upon self-examination and self-criticism, upon contrasting form and content, upon getting at the essence rather than the appearance, the tendency to say both a "yes" and a "no" as well as a "perhaps" to given historical situations and problems, none of these make life easy nor truth simple to arrive at. The Wisconsin Synod when faced with a serious crisis that in a special sense was the *kind* of crisis that could not help but put the concrete implications of the *Wauwatosa Theology* to the test was unable to deal with the problem creatively and thus had finally to say "retract or get out." Thus, not only the Protestants, but even Koehler could no longer be tolerated. As a matter of historical fact, what the Wisconsin Synod did resort to was precisely the kind of simplism that I see as

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[1] Especially revealing as an illustration of pragmatic improvisation might be the response of German-American Lutheranism to the anti-German hysteria of World War I. As an example of a rationale provided for just the sort of pragmatic improvisation I have in mind, see Theodore C. Graebner, *The Borderland of Right and Wrong*, 4th edition. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1938). Here the Lutheran doctrine of *Adiaphora* has been given a twist that allows a very wide berth for improvisation. The approach, while radically different from that of Koehler, does in any case provide a warrant for adaptation to environment.

such a dominant influence in the history of American Lutheranism. May it not be that the particular story which we have here devoted ourselves to can help us also to interpret other facets of the story of American Lutheranism and the triumph of "orthodoxy?"

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

There is no attempt here to compile a complete bibliography of Midwestern American Lutheranism, nor even to list all the items which have been consulted in the preparation of this dissertation. Many of the items consulted were used only for limited purposes, and at any rate, the footnotes will provide bibliographical information concerning them. I am not attempting either to discuss here the basic problems of historical research in the area of American Lutheranism, although the first chapter of the text includes some survey of the literature as well as some indication of what needs to be done. I would, however, re-emphasize the dearth of careful studies in the field of Midwestern American Lutheranism, especially the lack of studies of the German synods with which I am most concerned. Until much more work has been done in this area any definitive history of American Lutheranism will remain an impossibility. I want to re-emphasize, too, the need for careful analysis of the controversies that were carried on among these Midwestern synods. The literature is voluminous and accessible and provides an excellent means of getting at the ethos of this form of Lutheranism.

The bibliographical problems of this study have been relatively simple, or at least I made them quite simple, by choosing to confine myself to type of study which the available materials made possible. That is, the primary concern of this work has not been to provide a historical survey of the Wisconsin Synod or of Midwestern Lutheranism, but to examine in some depth the Wauwatosa Theology. This means, of course, that the primary task was the analysis of the writings of the three men who are associated with what has been called the Wauwatosa Theology. More particularly, it involved an examination of the writings of John Philip Koehler. These writings were readily accessible and thus no bibliographical problem presented itself. But since the Wauwatosa Theology most certainly did have its Vorgeschichte and since it is most obviously of significance precisely within its time and theological context, the other main task was to examine other representative theological works of Midwestern American Lutheranism. As will be obvious, I chose in doing this to concentrate on the Christian Dogmatics of Franz Pieper. In doing this I have accepted J. P. Koehler's size-up of the theological character of Midwestern Lutheranism. Pieper does then personify in a very articulate form what Koehler saw as a dominant characteristic of the theological approach of the "orthodox" synods. I am well aware, and have pointed out, that to use Pieper as typical represents in some respects an oversimplification (as notably with respect to the Norwegians, who only somewhat ambiguously belong within Midwestern American Lutheranism in the sense that Koehler used that term.) Still, the use of Pieper for the purposes of illustration as I have used him here is basically a defensible use. It is also defensible to speak of Midwestern American Lutheranism as I have spoken of it here provided one realizes the somewhat arbitrary but not meaningless sense in which this has been defined. In any event, the use of Franz Pieper as well as the acceptance of J. P. Koehler's size-up of Midwestern American Lutheranism at least lets us know what the Wauwatosa Theology thought it was speaking to and attempting to reorient.

In listing the specific items I have chosen to divide them not in terms of form (books, periodicals, etc.), but in categories proceeding from the general to the specific subject of my study.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. American Lutheranism

Although there is no adequate interpretive text covering this subject, there are several texts which at least attempt to tell the story from an over-all perspective. There are also several works which are narrower in scope but throw light on the larger subject. Most significant in the preparation of this work have been the following:

Bente, Friedrich. *American Lutheranism.* Volume I. *Early History of American Lutheranism and the Tennessee Synod.* Volume II. *The United Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1919).

Both volumes are important especially as a Missourian analysis and criticism of Eastern Lutheranism. Bente represents the point of view of the exponents of orthodoxy and confessionalism withih American Lutheranism.

Ferm, Vergilius. *The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology; a Study of the Issue between American Lutheranism and Old Lutheranism.* (New York: Century, 1927).

Properly speaking, this book does not belong here, since it is a study of a specific issue in Eastern Lutheranism. Yet, Ferm's book provides an excellent introduction to the question of self-identity which American Lutheranism had to answer.

Ferm portrays the type of Lutheranism which Midwestern American Lutheranism rejected and which is referred to as "American Lutheranism."

The Wisconsin Synod in its early days had tendencies toward this form of Lutheranism and thus this book is of special value in pointing up what the Wisconsin Synod confessionalists tried to avoid.

Jacobs, Henry Eyster. The Lutherans. Volume IV of The American Church History Series (New York: Christian Literature Co., 1893).

A well-written survey covering the period up to its date of publication.

Luecker, Erwin (Ed.) The Lutheran Cyclopedia (St. Louis: Concordia, 1954.)

A well-edited cyclopedia with a wealth of information on men and groups in American Lutheranism.

Neve, Juergen Ludwig. A Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America. 2nd Edition. (Burlington, Iowa: German Literary Board, 1916).

----------. History of the Lutheran Church in America. Prepared for third edition by Willard D. Allbeck. 3rd Edition. (Burlington, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1934).

The two editions should be used together since each includes valuable material not included in the other.

The Neve volumes are not as well-written as the standard text of Wentz, but are very useful for a survey of the Midwestern synods. Neve is especially valuable in that he takes seriously and discusses quite thoroughly the controversies of these synods. Neve, too, is relatively free from a "public relations" approach to telling his story. For the purposes of this study Neve was the most helpful of the surveys.

Polack, William Gustave. The Building of A Great Church, A Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America. 2nd Edition (St. Louis: Concordia, 1941).

The "great church" becomes primarily the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. While not one of the better surveys it is a useful supplement, especially to the Neve volumes.

Schmidt, Herbert H., "The Literature of the Lutherans in America," Religion in Life, XXVII (Autumn, 1958), pp. 583-603.

A very useful bibliographical guide to the literature.

Spaude, Paul W., The Lutheran Church Under American Influence (Burlington, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1943.)

This is a valuable and highly suggestive interpretation of the story of American Lutheran "captivity to environment." The book should be used along with the Wentz volume, since both in a sense have assimilation as their themes. What Wentz sees as a rather glorious success story, Spaude sees as a dismal story of decline and loss of birthright. The book is voluminously documented and gets at a side of the Lutheran story not usually studied.

Wentz, Abdel Ross. A Basic History of Lutheranism in America (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1955).

This is well-written, well-organized, and covers the major developments. It also includes useful bibliographical material. As a standard text it is the most useful survey available.

Throughout, however, Wentz has a strong thesis to present. "The position of the Lutheran church in America rests upon a birthright. It is not an immigrant church that needed to be naturalized after it was transplanted from some European land. The Lutheran church in America is an integral and potent part of American Christianity. The people in the Lutheran churches of the land are a constituent and typical element of the American nation."

Because of this thesis and its debatability, I suggest that the book be used alongside the Spaude volume since the two are in such radical conflict.

Wolf, Edmund Jacob. The Lutherans in America, A Story of Struggle, Progress, Influence, and Marvelous Growth (New York: J. A. Hill, 1890).

In many respects this work is obsolete but nevertheless remains useful, especially, perhaps, for revealing how the story of American Lutheranism looked to Wolf at the time he wrote his survey.

II. Midwestern American Lutheranism

The dearth of scholarly studies of the Midwestern Lutheran synods points up a major area in which historical research needs to be done. There are a few helpful and careful studies. Especially notable are the following:

Belgium, Gerhard Lee. The Old Norwegian Synod in America, 1853-1890 (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1957).

A careful study of the most orthodox of the Norwegian synods. The work not only illustrates what needs to be done in the study of other synods, but is very helpful in pointing up the intentions of the promoters of orthodoxy among American Lutherans.

Forster, Walter Otto. Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri (St. Louis: Concordia, 1953).

A superb study of the founding of the Missouri Synod. The book was especially important for this study in that it both points up the modifications that took place in church polity in the most representative of the orthodox synods when it faced the American situation, but also furnishes the historical background for C. F. W. Walther's views on Church and Ministry.

Nelson, E. Clifford, and Fevold, Eugene L. The Lutheran Church Among Norwegian-Americans (Minneapolis:

Augsburg, 1960.)

This excellent interpretive study embodies in its two volumes the contents of two careful doctoral dissertations: Nelson's The Union Movement Among Norwegian-American Lutherans (Yale, 1952), and Fevold's Norwegian-American Lutheranism, 1870-1890 (Chicago, 1951).

The Nelson-Fevold work, as well as the two dissertations, provides, among other things, a corrective to J. P. Koehler's somewhat oversimplified analysis of the Midwestern Lutheran Synods. This is especially true on the problem of the Election Controversy where the controversy had somewhat different implications among the Norwegians from among the Germans.

The nature of my study has meant that I have been especially interested in the theological methodology of the Midwestern Lutherans. A study of the various controversies is perhaps the best single means to grasp the extent to which the methodology determined the nature and course of the controversies. Special attention was paid to the Election Controversy and to a few illustrative documentations of the methodological procedure employed in that controversy.

Lehre und Wehre; Theologisches und Kirchlich-zeitgeschichtliches Monatsblatt (St. Louis: Concordia, 1855-1929).

This was C. F. W. Walther's polemical theological journal founded to do battle for the cause of "die reine Lehre." The journal constitutes an excellent introduction to the methodology of American Lutheran orthodoxy. Together with Franz Pieper's Christian Dogmatics, it personifies what J. P. Koehler saw as the grand tradition of Midwestern American Lutheranism.

Schodde, George H. (Ed.) The Error of Modern Missouri: Its Inception, Development, and Refutation (Columbus, Ohio: Lutheran Book Concern, 1897).

The best single thing to set forth the "Intuitu Fidei" view of Election as that was held among American Lutherans. Schodde constitutes a verification of J. P. Koehler's general viewpoint that the most "repristination" of the American Lutherans were those who opposed Missouri on the Election Controversy.

The following theological texts have proven especially helpful in furnishing a context in which to understand the Wauwatosa Theology.

Fritz, John H. C. Pastoral Theology: A Handbook of Scriptural Principles, Written Especially for Pastors of the Lutheran Church (St. Louis: Concordia, 1932).

Based on C. F. W. Walther's Amerikanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie, (St. Louis: Concordia, 1872), this represents the theology of American Lutheran orthodoxy applied to pastoral practice. The book is of special value, since even today it continues to be widely used in American Lutheranism, also in circles outside of the Missouri Synod.

Hoenecke, Adolph. Evangelische-lutherische Dogmatik (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1912).

The major work of the only important dogmatician in the history of the Wisconsin Synod.

Hove, Elling. Christian Doctrine (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1926).

Widely used among the Norwegians, Hove's is an abbreviated and inferior version of what Franz Pieper represented.

Jacobs, Henry E. Summary of the Christian Faith (Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1905.)

Although less vigorous in its statement of orthodoxy than some of the other texts, Jacobs is essentially a restatement in catechetical form of the theology of Lutheran orthodoxy.

Pieper, Franz August Otto. Christian Dogmatics (St. Louis: Concordia, 1950-1953).

A translation of his Christliche Dogmatik, published in three volumes by Concordia, from 1917-1924.

Schmid, Heinrich. The Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Verified from the Original Sources. Translated from the German and Latin, by Charles A. Hay and Henry E. Jacobs. Third Edition revised (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1899).

Not so much a dogmatics text "as it is a compilation of theological statements drawn from the writings of fourteen prominent Lutheran theologians who lived during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries."

Valentine, Milton. Christian Theology (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1905-1907).

An example of a Lutheran dogmatics text in substantially a different tradition than that of Lutheran orthodoxy.

Walther, Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm. The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel. Translated by W. H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia, 1929).

The theology of Lutheran orthodoxy applied to pastoral care with warmth and evangelical fervor. Represents essentially what J. P. Koehler considered the best in the theological tradition of Midwestern American Lutheranism. At the same time, Walther's approach here also relied on a methodology which Koehler would regard as excessively influenced by the Lutheran dogmatics of the seventeenth century.

III. *The Wisconsin Synod, the "Wauwatosa Theology," and the "Protestant Controversy"*

The primary investigation has involved the analysis of the writings of the three men associated with the *Wauwatosa Theology*. This has presented no bibliographical problems. No adequate history of the Wisconsin Synod exists which covers the whole development. The problems of getting at the Synod side to the *Protestant Controversy* have been pointed out.

Both for the history of the Synod and the *Protestant Controversy* I have made use of the official reports of the conventions of the Wisconsin Synod and those of the districts. Mostly these have not been especially helpful, especially not on the subject of the *Protestant Controversy*. For J. P. Koehler's personality, teaching career, and old age, a large number of interviews with former students have been revealing. So, too, the *Secretary's Minutes* of the *Protestant Conference* have many of them been available and have been extremely valuable in gaining insights into Koehler's observations when he was in an informal situation and no longer representing the Synod.

Bericht der Dokumente und Korrespondenzen der Beiden Extra Synodal-Versammlungen des West-Wisconsin-Distrikts der Allgemeinen Evangelisch-Lutherischen

Synode von Wisconsin und Anderen Staaten, Gehalten zu Watertown, Wisconsin, vom 15. bis 18. November, 1927, und vom 15.bis 16. Februar, 1928 (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1928.)

A collection of the documents of the Protestant Controversy from the side of the West Wisconsin District, which was the district of the Wisconsin Synod which was originally involved in the issue.

Continuing in His Word; The History of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, 1850-1950 (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1951).

An official history prepared by a committee for the Synod's centennial celebration. Typical of such publications in that it emphasizes externals and is seriously lacking in critical analysis. Contains no bibliographical material.

Faith-Life (Mosinee, Wisconsin: The Protestant Conference, 1928 -).

A monthly periodical published by the Protestant Conference. It is the most important source for the study of the Protestant Controversy.

It has been important for this study also because it contains a large number of original articles by J. P. Koehler as well as translations of many of his articles in the Theologische Quartalschrift. Of special importance is the following: "The History of the Wisconsin Synod," XI-XVIII (January, 1938-January, 1944).

An installment appeared each month and included a translation and revision of Koehler's Geschichte der Wisconsin Synod, as well as a completion of the German work which had covered only the early period. This constitutes the only scholarly history of the Wisconsin Synod, although the period after 1900 consists largely of Koehler's personal observations rather than a connected study.

Evangelische-Lutherische Gemeinde-Blatt (1865 -).

The official church paper of the Wisconsin Synod in the German language. Published biweekly and referred to as Gemeinde-Blatt.

Hensel, Paul. The Wauwatosa Gospel--Which Is It? (Marshfield, Wisconsin: The Protestant Conference Press, 1928).

An important document for any understanding of the Protestant Controversy. It contains the Beitz Paper, the Gutachten der Theologischen Fakultaet von Wauwatosa, and Hensel's analysis of both and his defense of Beitz.

Hoermann, Arthur. Our Northwestern College: The Story of Its Origin and Growth (Watertown, Wisconsin, 1915).

Koehler, John Philip. *Der Brief Pauli an die Galater.* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1915).

----------. *Geschichte der Allgemeinen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Wisconsin und Andern Staaten. Erster Band: Vorgeschichte und Geschichte der Gruending und Sammlung der Wisconsin-Synode* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1925).

----------. *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte*. (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1917).

A compendium of church history. The most important single source for an understanding of Koehler's approach to history and his stress on cultural history.

The Northwestern Lutheran (January 7, 1914 -). The Wisconsin Synod's official English organ. Published biweekly.

Pieper, August. *Jesaias II: Kommentar Ueber den Zweiten Teil des Propheten Jesaias, Kapitel 40-66*. (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1929).

The best source for an understanding of August Pieper as a serious and talented Old Testament exegete.

Schaller, John. *Biblical Christology* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1919).

The first part of Schaller's projected work in systematic theology.

----------. *The Book of Books, A Brief Introduction to the Bible for Christian Teachers and Readers* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1918).

Theologische Quartalschrift. (1904 -).

The main source used in the preparation of this dissertation. This was heavily contributed to by John Schaller, August Pieper, and John Philip Koehler. It is the best illustration of what has been called the Wauwatosa Theology.

After 1928, the character of the Theologische Quartalschrift changed, and it is thus, too, the best single source for documenting the change that has taken place over the years in what dominates the theological leadership of the Wisconsin Synod.